

E4334

197

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
STATE  
DISUNION CONVENTION,

HELD AT  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

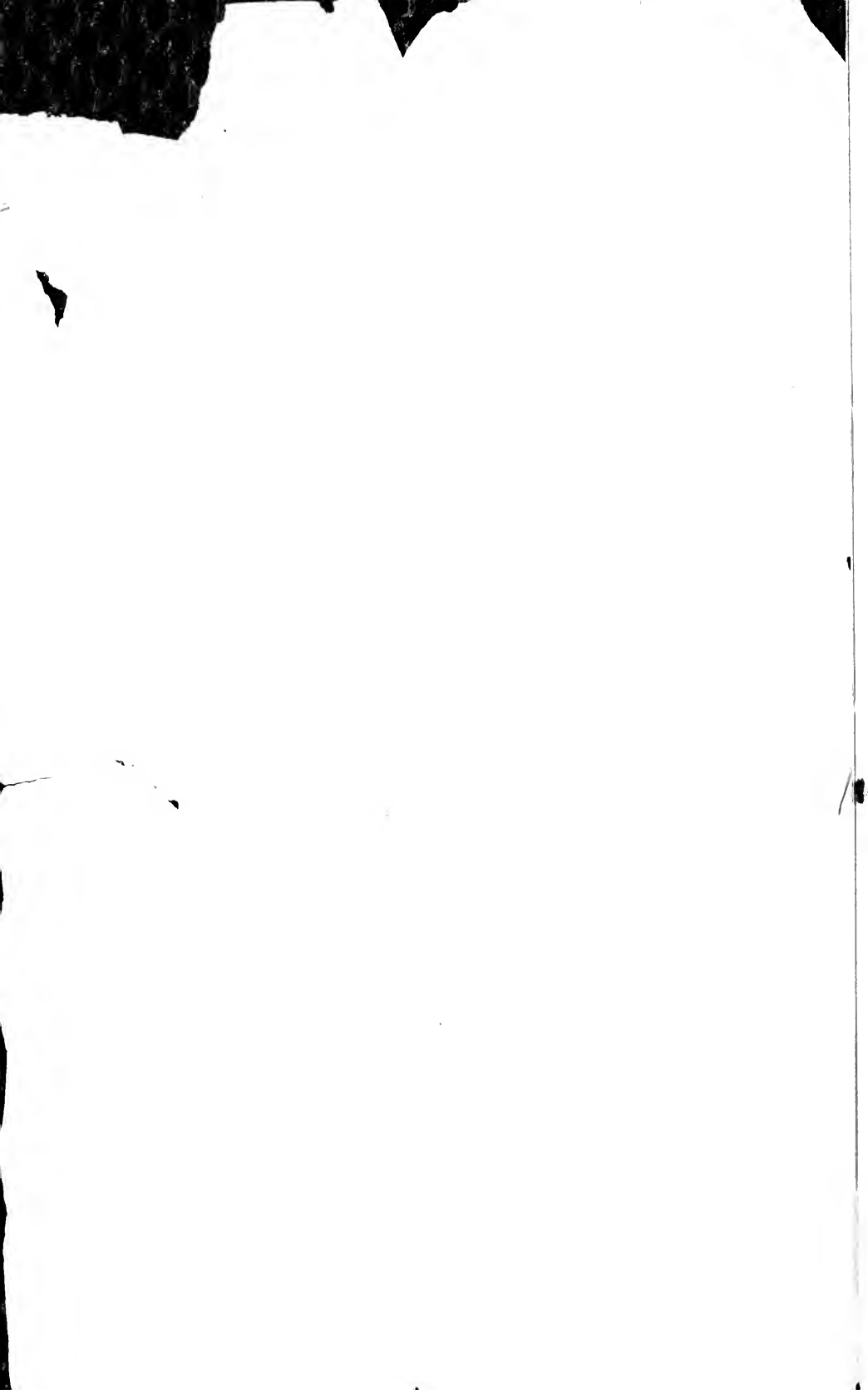
JANUARY 15, 1857.

---

PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY J. M. W. YERRINTON.

---

BOSTON:  
PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE.  
1857.



PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
STATE  
DISUNION CONVENTION;

HELD AT  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

JANUARY 15, 1857.

---

PHONOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY J. M. W. YERRINTON.

---

BOSTON:  
PRINTED FOR THE COMMITTEE.  
1857.

EA 25

7/1

20. 2.

## CALL FOR THE CONVENTION.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Worcester, believing the result of the recent Presidential Election to involve four years more of Pro-Slavery Government, and a rapid increase in the hostility between the two sections of the Union:

Believing this hostility to be the offspring, not of party excitement, but of a fundamental difference in education, habits, and laws:

Believing the existing Union to be a failure, as being a hopeless attempt to unite under one government two antagonistic systems of society, which diverge more widely with every year:

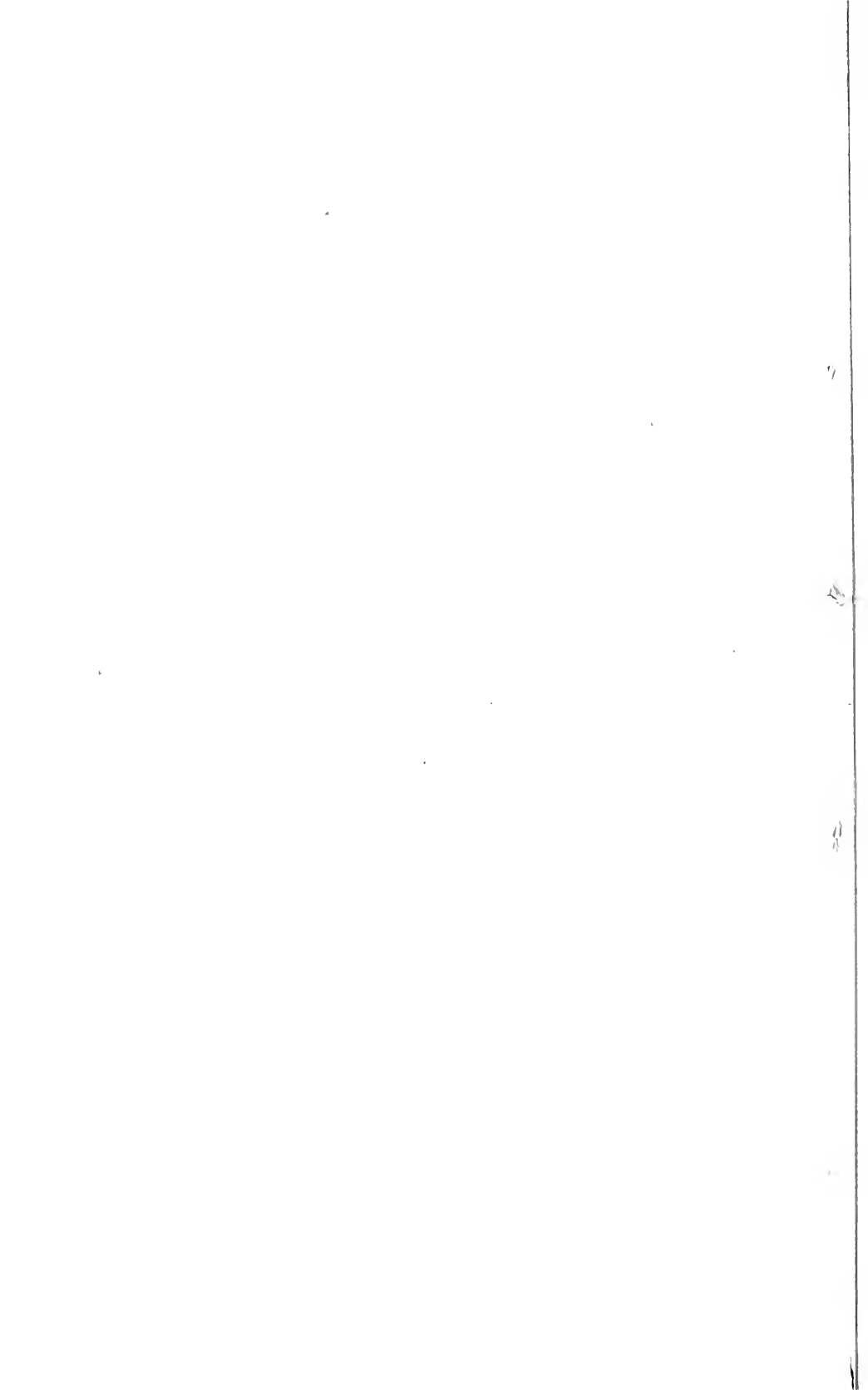
And believing it to be the duty of intelligent and conscientious men to meet these facts with wisdom and firmness:

Respectfully invite our fellow-citizens of Massachusetts to meet in Convention at Worcester, on Thursday, Jan. 15, to consider the practicability, probability, and expediency, of a Separation between the Free and Slave States, and to take such other measures as the condition of the times may require.

Thos. W. Higginson,  
Thomas Earle,  
Henry H. Chamberlin,  
Seth Rogers,  
D. C. Gates,  
O. D. Haven,  
Ebenezer Hemenway,  
Theophilus Brown,  
David McFarland, Jr.,  
Lewis A. Bacon,  
H. G. O. Blake,  
O. F. Harris,  
A. R. Marsh,  
Elbridge Boyden,  
Ivers Gibbs,  
E. F. Rogers,  
Stephen S. Foster,  
Isaac Bartlett,  
Wm. B. Earle,  
Ira T. Allen,  
Caleb C. Capron,  
C. H. Cross,  
B. B. Marshall,  
D. R. Gates,  
Wm. D. Cady,  
Isaac Mason,  
William J. Brown,  
Allen Walker,  
Charles F. Allen,  
J. L. Tarbox,

Wm. Henry Nourse,  
Alfred Wyman,  
S. D. Tourtelotte,  
Effingham L. Capron,  
Frederick A. M. Perry,  
Addison P. Smith,  
Ralph T. Plimney,  
V. R. Ballard,  
Richard T. Buck,  
N. G. Lyman,  
T. P. Hastings,  
W. D. G. McVey,  
Isaac Smith,  
G. U. Campbell,  
Joseph A. Howland,  
Thos. W. Houchin,  
E. S. Howes,  
Isaac Howes,  
Nathan Harkness,  
C. D. Marey,  
J. H. Crane,  
Everett L. Sweet,  
Ap.leton Fay,  
George R. Johnson,  
J. B. Bell,  
William Green,  
Peter Williams,  
J. S. Mowbray,  
David Brown,  
Jonathan A. White,

Alden B. Knight,  
George C. Rice,  
William Coe,  
Asa F. Rice,  
Leander Eaton,  
Daniel Lovering,  
John Brewer,  
Levi Moore,  
Levi Moore, Jr.,  
Lawson Harrington,  
James McFarland,  
George G. Noyes,  
John A. Durkins,  
John Wright,  
Charles Sprague,  
Charles A. Kyle,  
Adams Foster,  
Asa Gates,  
M. L. Eastman,  
Eli Johnson,  
Levi L. Johnson,  
Otis Conant,  
S. H. Fuller,  
Bartholomew Moran,  
George W. Gould,  
Charles F. Noyes,  
Thomas Noyes,  
J. W. Marchant,  
Samuel May, Jr.,  
(Leicester,) *And others.*



## PROCEEDINGS.

---

IN accordance with a Call previously issued, a State Convention, for the purpose of considering the "practicability, probability, and expediency of a separation of the Free and Slave States," was held in the City Hall, Worcester, on Thursday, January 15, 1857.

The Convention was called to order by Rev. T. W. HIGGINSON, of Worcester, and was organized by the choice of the following officers:—

*President :*

HON. FRANCIS W. BIRD, of Walpole.

*Vice Presidents :*

THOMAS EARLE, of Worcester ;	WILLIAM ASHEY, of Newburyport ;
WM. LLOYD GARRISON, of Boston ;	ALVAN WARD, of Ashburnham ;
DANIEL MANN, of Sterling ;	CHARLES BRIGHAM, of Marlboro'.

*Secretaries :*

J. M. W. YERRINTON, of Boston ;     S. D. TOURTELOTTE, of Worcester.

Upon taking the chair, the President read the Call for the Convention.

Finance and Business Committees were then appointed, as follows :

*Business Committee*—T. W. HIGGINSON, Worcester ; WENDELL PHILLIPS, Boston ; JOEL SMITH, Leicester ; ELBRIDGE BOYDEN, Worcester ; LEWIS FORD, Abington.

*Finance Committee*—CHARLES F. HOVEY, Boston ; EDWIN D. DRAPER, Milford ; CHARLES K. WHIPPLE, Boston.

The President then addressed the Convention, as follows : —

#### ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

I read this morning, in the New York *Tribune*, an extract from the Worcester *Egis*, which, as it illustrates the present condition of things about us, I will read : —

"The truth is, that venom and passion have so dispossessed the New England heart of its natural decency, that it requires more moral courage in a son of old Massachusetts, or of the Granite State, to stand up, even upon his own acres, and express his own sentiments upon public policy, if they do not accord with the whisperings of political demagogues and partisan saints in the popular ear, than it would for Foster or Garrison to address a meeting under the very nose of Henry A. Wise. The time is coming, we patriotically trust, when the circumstance will not so exist ; but at present there is no denying its presence and vitality."

Of course, my friends, no man who has been in politics as long as I have, no man who has been engaged in business as long as I have, is unaware of the fact, that it is as much as a man's political prospects and business prosperity are worth, (unless his position as a business man is perfectly assured,) and as much as his social position is worth, to differ from his neighbors upon any question in this community. Still, I have felt, for the last four or five weeks, and particularly for the last two weeks, that as one of the humblest members of the Republican party of the last campaign, and one of the humblest members of the political organization that may hereafter be called to act politically against slavery, I desired to enter my protest against the construction which representative Republicans are putting upon the Republican platform, upon the present position of the party, and upon their future intentions. I undertake to say to my friends who belong to the Republican party, and who read no other papers but those of Boston or Massachusetts, you know nothing at all about what the representatives of the Republican party are doing at Washington. You do not know how leading Republicans at Washington are selling out the party. God knows, the Philadelphia platform is low enough ; but it took at least one step in advance of all other platforms. For the first time in the history of political parties in our country, it made this one issue with the Slave Power. We declared ourselves to be a party of one idea, recognizing the fact, that no political party can have more than one paramount idea. The old Whig and Democratic parties professed other issues, but the real fact was, that there was but one idea in their platforms, and that was, which should most actively perform the behests of slavery. They ridiculed us for our Buffalo platform, because, as they said, it contained but one idea ;



whereas, the only trouble with that platform was, that it attempted to present other issues. I say, the Philadelphia Convention took the position of opposition to the extension of slavery as their one idea; but the Philadelphia Convention did not estop us from going further. There is not a word in it which prevents those who accept Lysander Spooner's doctrine, that the Constitution is an Anti-Slavery instrument, and that under it we can, whenever we get the power, abolish slavery, from standing on that platform. But what say our friends in Congress? Representative Republicans in Congress declare before the country and the world, that the Republican party do not intend *ever* to interfere with slavery in the States; that they do not desire to do it; that if they had the power, they would not exercise it; that if they believed the Constitution gave the Federal Government power to abolish slavery, they would not vote for it. Says Gen. WILSON — "Senators have declared on this floor, that we have not disclaimed the right to interfere with slavery in the States. I understand the Senator from Ohio (Mr. Pugh) to say that we have not made that disclaimer. I say to that Senator — I say to all — that it was intended by this expression — 'The rights of the States shall be preserved' — to cover that and other questions of State rights." I simply desire to enter my protest, as one of the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention, against this construction of the "intentions" of that Convention. We did not "intend" that "State rights" means the *right* to enslave men and women. If we had so intended, we should have so said.

Gen. Wilson says further — "We vindicate the rights of the States — the right of the Southern States, if they choose to hold men in slavery"! This was Gen. Wilson's notion of State rights. With his private opinion we make no quarrel; but such is *not* the doctrine of the Philadelphia platform.

Again he says — "I am opposed to slavery. I am in favor of its abolition every where where I have the power" — (the trouble is, he disclaims the power to abolish it any where.) Gen. Wilson proceeds — "I want all men, who are opposed to slavery, to take a moderate and reasonable position, to abandon the extreme notions which those men (Wendell Phillips, &c.) entertain, *banish the negro discussions we are having in these Halls*, and leave slavery in the States where the Constitution leaves it, to the care of the people of those several States. I believe that when that is done, the liberal, high-minded, just men of the South will, in their own time, and in their own way, bring about a safe emancipation"!

Mr. HALE says — “ The Republican party believe that in the States they have no more right to meddle with slavery than they have to meddle with it in Turkey or Russia.” The Republican party never said that ; and a great many of them do not believe it, and would not have acted with the party if the platform had announced that doctrine.

Again he says — “ I have said, over and over again, speaking in my representative character as a Senator on this floor, I have no desire to meddle with slavery in the States — not the slightest.” Yet he adds — “ I desire to see slavery abolished ; ” and then says, “ I do not desire to see the Constitution amended to give me the power to do it. I disclaim the power entirely. *I do not want it. I would not take it if I could have it.* The responsibility of what I now have to do is quite enough for me. But the way I want it done is, by appealing to the enlightened consciences of those who hold slaves ” !

Says Mr. SHERMAN of Ohio — “ If I had my voice, I would not have one single political Abolitionist in the Northern States. I act with the Republican party, with hundreds of thousands of others, merely because the Republican party resists the extension, but does not seek the abolition of slavery.”

Mr. SMITH, of Tennessee, asked — “ Do I understand the gentleman to say that he does not desire to see the Abolitionists succeed ? ”

Mr. SHERMAN — “ I do not desire to see them succeed ” !

I might multiply similar quotations from speeches of prominent Republicans at Washington ; all, with only the exceptions of Gov. SEWARD in the Senate, and brave “ Old Gid ” in the House, take the same ground, that the Republican party never intends to take a step in advance. I came here to-day expressly to utter my public protest, as a Republican, against this construction of our platform. It is worse than idle for politicians to declare what they will or will not do hereafter. They are mere waifs upon the surface of the mighty stream of ideas. Man proposes, but God disposes.

Well, friends, the battle has been fought, politically, against the extension of slavery. It has been fought and lost. No intelligent man doubts that. The verdict of the country has been given unequivocally in favor of the extension of slavery. It cannot be denied that this is the practical result of the last campaign. The only question now is, what are we to do ? Are we to stand still — those of us who act under the Constitution — and fight over dead issues, as the Whig party did over banks, tariffs, and sub-treasuries, or are we, as intelligent, progressive men, to prepare to meet the coming crisis ? I hold that our duty, as

Republicans, is to prepare for the future. The verdict of the country has been rendered in favor of the pretended principles of the Nebraska Bill. Slavery goes wherever the people choose to carry it. The decision of the Supreme Court, in the Scott case, is soon to be given, affirming the extreme Southern doctrine, that slavery goes every where under the Federal flag. These are the issues we have got to meet, in the ballot-box or out of it, under the Constitution or over it, in the Union or out of it; and it is of no use for politicians at Washington to attempt to disguise that fact, or keep back the rising public sentiment of the country, or repress the popular indignation against slavery. The battle is between freedom and slavery, and we must meet it. Of course, I need not remind our friends that we are to be denounced as traitors, and treated as traitors, if we are to believe representative Republicans at Washington. There is no reason why every one of us should not be arrested as traitors, under the construction put upon the Constitution by the Federal authorities; and it would be no greater outrage upon any of our rights to imprison us to-night in Boston as traitors, than was the arrest of the members of the Topeka Legislature in Kansas. Of course, I do not refer to the policy of that movement. It was a sad mistake; but they had a perfect right to meet, if they would. But our right to assemble peaceably to discuss grievances is not only denied by the administration, but by Republican presses and Republican leaders. The *Providence Journal* says:—

“The Northern Disunionists will hold their Convention at Worcester on the 15th inst., ‘to consider the practicability, probability and expediency of a separation between the free and slave States, and to take such other measures as the condition of the times may require.’ It is neither practicable, probable, nor expedient. It cannot be done, and it ought not to be done; and those who try to do it, only add treason to folly, reducing themselves to the level of the nullifiers of the South, and unlike them, wanting the sympathy of any considerable portion of their own section of the country.”

Gen. WILSON converts the whole Republican party into hangmen, in the following extract from his speech in the Senate:—“In the public press, and before the people every where, the doctrine was maintained that we were for the Union; and if any men, North or South, laid their hands upon it, they should die, if we had the power, traitor deaths, and leave traitor names in the history of the Republic.”

Now, if that means any thing at all, if it is not the merest *brutum fulmen* that ever a child uttered, it means that if Gen. Wilson and the Republicans had the power, they would hang every one of us upon the next tree. They proclaim us traitors, because we are laying hands upon

his Union. I say, Liberty and Union, if it may be ; Liberty first, and Union afterward, if need be. Liberty in the Union and under the Constitution if possible ; but Liberty out of the Union and over the Constitution, if it must be. Liberty any how, and that speedily ! (Loud applause.) If that be treason, let Gen. Wilson and Franklin Pierce "make the most of it" ! These declarations mean something when they are uttered by the Federal authorities, and when they are reiterated by our own Massachusetts men, Representatives and Senators in Congress. We must not assume that it is mere idle talk. They mean something ; and we are to assume that we come here with halters around our necks.

Gentlemen, I occupy this position altogether unexpectedly to myself. I came here entirely as a private individual ; and at a later hour, I had intended to say a few words, somewhat differently from what I have said. But I have felt that it is time that this question of abolition should be met, and I came here to enroll myself among those who believe that the mission of this nation is Freedom, and who go for the abolition of slavery at the price of dissolution, if need be. At the same time, I do not believe that a dissolution of the Union is to be hastened or retarded by any acts of ours, or the Union-savers. I do not see how dissolution is possible.

I look upon the map, and I do not see where you can find the geographical line of division. Of course I believe, with every intelligent man, in the eternal antagonism between freedom and slavery. There is no union between the North and the South. We have no rights. This Union never did, does not now, and never can, governed by the same influences as now, give us any rights as members of the Northern portion of the Union. It never was worth any thing to the free States, except that, at the commencement of the government, our fathers, having just emerged from the Revolutionary war, felt the necessity of Union to prepare for the "common defence." In that age, when it was supposed that rights could be maintained only by war, and the power of the strongest was the only power recognised, they felt the necessity of a Union to protect the infant Republic from foreign aggressions. That necessity no longer exists ; and it seems to me that no sane and sensible man, who looks upon this matter apart from any political aspirations, can make himself believe that this Union is of any value to any body in the free States now. Still, it is an existing fact, and I cannot see where the division is to take place. But that freedom and slavery can exist under this form of government much longer, so long as I believe

there is a God in heaven, so long as I believe in eternal right, seems to me impossible. It cannot be.

Gentlemen say, "We do not propose to meddle with slavery in the States. In the progress of ages, it may be abolished; but we shall not interfere with it." Does any man who believes in God and right believe that these four millions of slaves can increase to eight millions, in the next generation, and this government hold together? It seems to me that the antagonism is necessary, inevitable, and that unless slavery is speedily abolished, a separation, in some form or other, must come. How it is to come, I do not know. My only hope is in framing a public opinion at the North as true to freedom as that of the South is to slavery, and then that public opinion will find an effective form of expression. Undoubtedly, the moral sentiment of the free States against slavery is stronger to-day than it ever was before, but it lacks efficient organization. There was opposition enough to slavery excited by the repeated outrages of the Slave Power in Congress, the passage of the Nebraska Bill, the Kansas outrages, and the assault upon Mr. Sumner, to have annihilated the Slave Power, if it had been allowed to exert itself. The jar was charged overwhelmingly, and if the wires had been directed to the citadel of slavery, it would have been blown to atoms; but the operators conducted the charge into the territories, and it was lost. We need an efficient organization of the anti-slavery sentiment of the free States. Is it possible? I leave this to others wiser than myself to decide.

\*

The HUTCHINSON FAMILY then sang one of their fine old anti-slavery songs, which was loudly applauded.

Rev. T. W. HIGGINSON said he had some seventy pages of manuscript, in the form of letters from half the notabilities of the country, but time would permit him to read only extracts from a few of them. [See Appendix.]

Mr. HIGGINSON, after reading extracts from several letters, reported the following resolutions, from the Committee on Business:—

#### RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, That the meeting of a State Disunion Convention, attended by men of various parties and affinities, gives occasion for a new statement of principles and a new platform of action.

Resolved, That the cardinal American principle is now, as always, liberty; while the prominent fact is now, as always, slavery.

Resolved, That the conflict between this principle of liberty and this fact of

slavery has been the whole history of the nation for fifty years; while the only result of this conflict has thus far been to strengthen both parties, and prepare the way for a yet more desperate struggle.

Resolved, That in this emergency, we can expect little or nothing from the South itself, because it is sinking deeper into barbarism every year;

Nor from a Supreme Court, which is always ready to invent new securities for slaveholders;

Nor from a President, elected almost solely by Southern voters;

Nor from a Senate, which is permanently controlled by the Slave Power;

Nor from a new House of Representatives, which, in spite of our agitation, will be more pro-slavery than the present one, though the present one has at length granted all which slavery asked;

Nor from *political action*, as now conducted; for the Republican leaders and presses freely admitted, in public and private, that the election of Fremont was, politically speaking, 'the last hope of freedom.' And even could the North cast an united vote in 1860, the South has before it four years of annexation previous to that time.

Resolved, That the fundamental difference between mere political action and the action we propose is this: that the one requires the acquiescence of the Slave Power, and the other only its opposition.

Resolved, That the necessity of disunion is written in the whole existing character and condition of the two sections of the country—in their social organization, education, habits and laws—in the dangers of our white citizens in Kansas and of our colored ones in Boston—in the wounds of Charles Sumner and the laurels of his assailant—and no government on earth was ever strong enough to hold together such opposing forces.

Resolved, That this movement does not seek merely disunion, but the more perfect union of the free States by the expulsion of the slave States from the confederation, in which they have ever been an element of discord, danger and disgrace.

Resolved, That it is not probable that the ultimate severance of the Union will be an act of deliberation or discussion,—but that a long period of deliberation and discussion must precede it: and this we meet to begin.

Resolved, That henceforward, instead of regarding it as an objection to any system of policy, that it will lead to the separation of the States, we will proclaim that to be the highest of all recommendations, and the greatest proof of statesmanship; and we will support, politically or otherwise, such men and measures as appear to tend most to this result.

Resolved, That by the repeated confession of Northern and Southern statesmen, "the existence of the Union is the chief guaranty of slavery;" and that the despots of the whole world have every thing to fear, and the slaves of the whole world every thing to hope, from its destruction, and the rise of a free Northern Republic.

Resolved, That the sooner the separation takes place, the more peaceful it will be; but that peace or war is a *secondary consideration*, in view of our present perils. Slavery must be conquered, "peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."

The Convention was next addressed by Rev. SAMUEL MAY, JR., of Leicester, as follows : —

## SPEECH OF REV. SAMUEL MAY, JR.

MR. PRESIDENT :

I desire to occupy the few moments before adjournment with an expression of the interest with which I first read the call for this Convention. I saw it with a degree of satisfaction which I have seldom felt in the case of any other meeting for the furtherance of the Anti-Slavery cause ; and I rejoiced that the time had come when there was to be a meeting of Massachusetts men and women to consider if the time has not fully come when it is their duty to make a broad line of separation, in every particular, between themselves and slavery.

Sir, the only thing which has troubled me since I have sat here to-day, has been to see indications of a feeling of distrust and fear in some quarters with regard to the position we take in holding this meeting. It would seem, from some remarks here, that there is a hesitation at being identified with this Convention ; and the number present, though respectable, certainly, yet when we remember that this is a *State* Convention, does not indicate that spirit of courage, determination and zeal, which ought to characterize Massachusetts in such an hour and on such a question as we are assembled to consider.

But, sir, I desired to take the floor mainly to express my devout thanks to God that I have lived to see the day when a Convention is called to consider this question of the longer continuance of our Federal Union, — when I may be a member of that Convention, and declare my own conviction before God, that it is time, high time, and long has been time, when we should cut for ever the bloody bond which unites us to the slaveholders, slave-breeders and slave-traders of this nation, and henceforth have no part nor lot with them in the iniquity and infamy which they are determined to perpetuate, and in which so long they have made us, or we have consented to be made, instruments and participants. The idea of “treason,” we ought to cast from us with contempt ; we ought to put it beneath our feet at once and for ever. We ought to remember, sir, that “old man eloquent,” when he arose on the floor of the House of Representatives, (I wish to God Massachusetts had representatives there now with the same spirit in them !) to present the petition of the Haverhill shoemakers for a dissolution of the Union, and the representatives of slavery sprang up on every side with hisses, crying out “Treason, treason !” and demanding his expulsion. The old

man calmly called on the Clerk of the House to read the Declaration of Independence, and the Clerk began:—"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to promote these ends, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that when any government becomes subversive of these ends, IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO ALTER OR ABOLISH IT." Again the hisses went up, and the old man said, "Read it again." "It is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." "Read it again!" said Mr. Adams, and the Clerk read it again, until those men were shamed into silence. We want such men now-a-days. We want men who will put their foot upon this cry of "Treason." In the name of all that is reasonable and just, I ask, if our fathers had the right to make a Constitution, have we not the right to unmake it? And is it not our duty to unmake it, when it proves a failure and a curse? Or, if we may not say a word about this Heaven-defying Union, let us be off to Russia, and become the servants of the Czar, or hide ourselves in some servile place, and never dare to call ourselves freemen again. The time has come when we are to decide whether there is any manliness or justice left in the land; whether we will blink this question for ever, and like miserable cowards, turn it over to our children, for them to grapple with, and compel them to grow up ashamed of their fathers and mothers, who dared not resist nor denounce the overgrown wickedness of their day.

THEODORE PARKER, in his letter, has told us a very good story of a man and his termagant and vicious wife,—a story which might have been made true of the nation as long ago as when Missouri first applied for admission to the Union as a slave State, for then the Northern husband, had he been firm and honest, might have maintained his rights, and possibly the Union too. But I remember, sir, another story of a man and his wife, which I think much better illustrates our present condition. In this story, the wife usually got the upper hand in their disputes, and often enforced her words by blows. One day, the husband, to escape from the effects of his wife's temper, crawled under the bed, and there lay growling and grumbling until she ordered him to be still. "No," said he, "I won't be still! As long as I have the spirit of a man in me, I won't be still!" (Great merriment.)

Sir, you rightly said, that the thing of all others needed at this time is, the formation of an earnest, resolute, courageous public sentiment;



but let us look at one question behind that. How are we to form it, when our hands are clasped with the slave-trader and slave-breeder? There is the trouble. Mr. GARRISON, ABBY KELLEY FOSTER, and a noble band of men and women — few but fearless — have tried to form that public sentiment for twenty years and upward. Why is it not stronger and better? Because, sir, our union with slavery has been all the time sapping our moral foundations. Our union with the slaveholder continually paralyzes the Northern conscience, and makes us cowards. There is the difficulty. I recall a piece of local history which illustrates this point. I would not speak too confidently, but I fear that even Worcester county does not stand, on this question of Union or Disunion, as high as it did in 1845. In that year, there assembled in this very hall a large convention, from every part of the county, called to protest against the Annexation of Texas to the United States. I was present in that Convention, as a citizen of Leicester. Judge Strong, of Leominster, was President of the Convention, and into it came such men as Levi Lincoln, Emory Washburn, Charles Allen, Abijah Bigelow, and others. It had been called without reference to party politics, yet some were of the opinion, which afterwards grew to be the general conviction, that the design of the leaders was to secure the vote of the County and State for Henry Clay. But I repeat, it was not called on a Clay basis, or a Whig basis, but it was to all citizens of Worcester county. And this hall was filled, and resolutions were introduced and adopted, strongly protesting against the annexation project. But there was no point in the resolutions — nothing from which the South or the North, the country or the world, could infer any thing else but that, though Massachusetts protested against annexation, still, if the thing were done, she would quietly submit to it. Disappointed and mortified that Massachusetts had no truer and loftier word to utter, in such an hour, a member of that Convention rose, and on his own responsibility moved a resolution to this effect: — “That the annexation of Texas to the Union would be a just and sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union.” This resolution was received with acclamation; and though the leading men of the Convention, and the Business Committee, protested against it, and urged that it should be withdrawn, yet it was not withdrawn, but went to vote, and a respectable majority of the Convention adopted it. But having been adopted in the face of such opposition, the defeated gentlemen took the attitude of suppliants, and begged the majority, as they had had the pleasure of a triumph, to reconsider it, as it might injure the good effect of what else the Convention had done! This

weak and inconclusive reasoning had sufficient effect upon a few who had voted with the majority (I will call no names, sir, now) to induce them to reconsider their votes, and so the resolution was lost. But the fact remains, that nearly two hundred men, on that day, twelve years ago, adopted that resolution with acclamation; and I confess to some doubt whether we should get such a vote as that to-day, in a similarly-called Convention in this county. Taking the country at large, I have no doubt that there has been a great advance on this point, and that this Union is no longer worshipped as it has been, and set above Right, Justice, and God himself. Yet, when I see such men as HENRY WILSON, and even CHARLES SUMNER, refusing to touch this question, I cannot but fear that the twelve years which have elapsed have seen, in the minds of many Massachusetts men, a great degeneracy, while they will undoubtedly show great progress in other quarters. And I know, sir, my own soul tells me, that there can be nothing more fatal to the formation of such a public sentiment as you have well described as indispensable, than our continuance in union with the Slave Power. It is this which corrupts and weakens us, and always must.

Mr. President, you said there was a difficulty in drawing the line of separation. In answer to that, allow me to give the reply of a man who has been an Abolitionist, faithful and true as steel, from the beginning, always stepping forward, never backward, — I mean FRANCIS JACKSON, of Boston. (Applause.) When he was asked where he would draw the line, "I would draw it," said he, "directly here" — describing with his hands a circle round his own person. But, sir, if a further reply be called for, we say, Let *Massachusetts* draw the line around her own borders; let New England draw it around *her* borders, that she may defend the slave, and no longer be his overseer. (Applause.) New England, sir, has all the elements of a nation, — industry, energy, enterprise, skill, wealth, knowledge, — ability to feed and clothe herself and her children; and if she chooses, she can do it against the world. But who would be against her in that just and honorable position? Believe me, sir, none of whom she would have the slightest fear. She would have very few enemies in such a position. But you may be sure she would not stand alone. By the time that New England has rubbed her eyes and got ready to take this stand, she will find many others ready to stand with her. In the name of God, I say, sir, let us give such an impulse to-day to this desire for a new Union, on the basis of freedom, justice and righteousness, as can never be mistaken, and never be again rolled back!

Sir, this is not a mere question of expediency ; it is not whether the Republican party, or any party, is going to be benefitted by this movement or not. We are now, while in this Union, ourselves conspirators against the rights and liberties of our fellow-men. We are co-partners in an infernal scheme for depriving men and women of their God-given and inalienable rights. We are members of a Union which, by the concurrent testimony of the clearest-headed men, South as well as North, is now, and long has been, the chief means of sustaining slavery, and giving it its vitality. It is not a question, therefore, of expediency. It is one of duty before High Heaven. It is OUR DUTY TO SEPARATE OURSELVES from all connection with the dealer in human flesh, with the oppressor of his kind ; and if we may not, as we do not propose to do, go on to his plantation, and say, “ You *shall* liberate your slaves ! ” we have a right, and it is our duty to say to him, “ If you will insist on holding your slaves, you shall do it without our help ! ” (Applause.)

## SPEECH OF HON. F. W. BIRD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Among the letters on file are one from CHARLES F. ADAMS and another from GEORGE R. RUSSELL. I take the liberty to make a single remark in relation to them, and that is this,—that the three delegates from the old Adams and Mann District to the Philadelphia Convention are represented in this Convention to-day—CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS and GEORGE R. RUSSELL by letter, and the third in the person of the President ; and I undertake to say, that our construction of the purpose of the Philadelphia Convention is quite as good as that of gentlemen in Washington. I do not claim any right to interpret that platform, but this single fact, taken in connection with what I have said in regard to the position of Republican leaders in Washington, shows a wide divergence of opinion in regard to that matter.

And here let me say one word in relation to Gen. Wilson. The idea contained in his letter is, that we are to accomplish all our anti-slavery measures by political action. God forbid, that knowing the General so long as I have, I should be supposed to entertain the slightest doubt of his perfect sincerity and integrity as an anti-slavery man. But he views every thing from the politician’s stand-point, liable, as we all are, to bias in relation to supposed interests. He believes the ballot is omnipotent. He believes in that nonsense of Pierpont about the ballot, —

“ That executes a freeman’s will  
As lightning does the will of God.”

He believes that, even after the ballot-stuffing in San Francisco and the election of the Bogus Legislature in Kansas! And believing that, and strangely ignorant, as it seems to me, or strangely shutting his eyes to the political history of the past thirty years, and even ever since the formation of the Constitution, which shows a constant lowering of the standard with every triumph of the Slave Power, he still believes that political action can successfully resist the Slave Power, the extension of slavery, and the perpetuation of slavery propagandism in our country. Of course, I do not believe it. Look at the political organizations in Massachusetts. Look at public sentiment, as expressed in its political organizations. I believe there is a vast amount of anti-slavery sentiment here; but as developed in existing political organizations, what have we got, what have we had? Some one said, in regard to Know-Nothingism, that it was an institution for raising small potatoes; but we have learned more than that — that it is an institution for raising rotten potatoes. But worse than that, when we met here last autumn, our friends from Washington came on, and begged us to help raise rotten potatoes. Well, we declined, and we came near having a pretty bad fight about it. We wanted to try and see if we could not raise sound potatoes; but finally we made a compromise — as we always do in this country. (Laughter.) The other party said, “Well, if you will not help us raise rotten potatoes, agree not to raise any, and leave us to raise the rotten ones.” We agreed to it. But what did the rascals do after that? Why, they abused us like pickpockets, because we did not turn to and help them raise rotten potatoes; that is, because we did not vote for Gardner. (Laughter and applause.) A few of us tried to set out some slips of the old Quiney stock, which we knew would not be subject to the rot. Heavens, how they abused us!

But what a crop of rotten potatoes we have raised here in Massachusetts; from that huge “carbunculous lie” that has broken out on the body politic of Massachusetts, and is enthroned in the State House for another year, down to those exceedingly small potatoes which have been transplanted to the lower House of Congress! Look at the men Massachusetts sends to the House! With one or two exceptions, every one ought to be in a Hospital, the State Prison, or the Primary School. (Laughter and applause.) These are the men we returned the other day, except, thank God! here in the Ninth and Eleventh Districts. (Renewed applause.) This is the anti-slavery public sentiment incarnated in the political organizations of Massachusetts.

Is there no hope of an effective political organization against slavery?

The Republican party, if it ever enters the field again, must meet the issue presented by the Slave Power, and that is, Freedom every where or Slavery every where. This issue is boldly made by the slavery propagandists in Congress. Gov. Brown, of Mississippi, says: — “The simple truth is, Mr. President, there is not one man in a thousand who knows any thing of slavery practically that does not believe it to be the normal condition of the negro race”! Mark that — the *normal* condition of the whole race! Mr. Mason, of Virginia, says: —

“Sir, I hold this to be the constitutional doctrine: The institution of slavery existed when the Constitution was formed; it is recognised there as an existing social institution. It is not only protected by the duty imposed upon the Federal Government to see to the rendition of fugitives from it, but it is elevated into the element of political power by the Constitution; it is represented and made an element of political power. That is the contract into which we entered. I say, then, that being so under the Constitution, and in the spirit and tone of the Constitution, we have a right to the just and legitimate expansion of the institution; and if there were a power in the Federal Government to restrict or limit that expansion, it would be perfectly indifferent to us whether it should be exercised by prohibiting its expansion within the States where it exists, or outside their limits.”

The power of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories is as stoutly denied as the power to prohibit it in the States. When the public sentiment of the Free States is as true to freedom as that of the South is to slavery, we shall have no difficulty in finding power in the Constitution to deal with slavery in the States as we now propose to deal with it in the Territories. Let us start with the Democratic doctrine that the power which passes an act can repeal it. We will say to Texas, — “Emancipate your slaves, or we repeal the act annexing Texas.” We then take Arkansas, Florida, Missouri, — for surely when the Slave Power has repealed a part of the act admitting Missouri, we can repeal the balance. And by the time we had gone through with the new Slave States, the Slave States of the old Thirteen would begin to shake in their shoes, and we would very soon fulfil the guarantee of a “Republican form of government” to all the States. All we want, my friends, is a public sentiment which shall hate slavery as you and I hate it. Shall we get it before it is for ever too late?

The false and fatal element of American politics is “compromise” — that is, the idea that the Constitution is the paramount law, and when it requires us to do certain things contrary to the law of God or the law of our own conscience, we must obey it. It is this that compels our friends at Washington to take the low position they occupy. They say, — “In our individual capacity, we have our own opinions about slavery, but in

our representative capacity, as under the Constitution, we are bound to accept the interpretation of the courts, and we pledge ourselves never to interfere with slavery." That is the doctrine preached by venal, corrupt, mercenary politicians, of both sections of the country, and impressed upon the conscience of the North by the "lower law" clergy. It is that which is corrupting and demoralizing and debauching us all; and from that, there is no escape, politically, except in an interpretation of the Constitution which shall make it a charter of Freedom, and not a bond of Slavery.

My friends, I have trespassed longer upon your patience than I intended. I am obliged to leave the city in the next train, and let me say one word more. You all read, in the accounts of the whipping of Mr. Senator Bell's slaves, that the poor wretches endured the tortures with heroic contempt and even joy, exclaiming, "Fremont and his men hear every blow!" Our gallant leader, I doubt not, did hear every blow, and would gladly have led on to the rescue; but, alas, alas, "his men" at Washington did not, would not hear a blow! They do not desire to meddle with slavery in the States. Let us, my friends, by our doings, to-day, declare that we hear the blows that fall at every moment upon the backs of our brethren and sisters in the house of bondage.

The Hutchinsons were then invited to sing, and kindly responded, giving the song entitled "True Freedom — the way to gain it."

It being one o'clock, the Convention then adjourned to two o'clock, P. M.

---

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

DR. MANN, of Sterling, Vice President, called the Convention to order, and proceeded to address the audience as follows: —

#### SPEECH OF DR. DANIEL MANN.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I wish for an immediate separation of the free portion of our country from the slave portion. It is a position to which I have too tardily come, but which my sense of duty and patriotism compels me now to take. I will briefly show you the grounds of my position, and that they are broad enough to accommodate every true patriot.

And, firstly, why should we not separate? Of what advantage is our

so-called "Union" to ourselves or to humanity? The only possible pretences that ever were plausible are, that it aids to support the expenses of government, and gives strength to meet war and invasion. If any body is so far behind the age as to suppose an invasion of the Free States possible, or that, in any emergency, our men could not drive off the invaders, or our women capture them, he is so obsolete a fossil that even the story of the Revolution will be news to him, and he will learn with surprise that some seven or eight of our present Free States did, some seventy-five years ago, when their whole combined power was less than several of them now possess singly, actually resist and repel an invasion by the first maritime and military power in the world; and did, in several deliberate and determined campaigns and desperate pitched battles, demonstrate the homely axiom that "Yankees can't be beat." Since that time, the number of our Free States has more than trebled, and each separate State has more than twice trebled its power. So that, if all the world should combine to beat us now, they could not begin to do it; and besides, no power in the world has the least desire or thought of attempting it.

But if invasion were possible, and we were weak enough to want help, could the Slave States give it? Past history will answer this question also. In that same war of the Revolution, when help would have been acceptable, they could not give it. While the North was pouring forth her young men and old, from every town, village and hamlet, and emptying her treasuries and granaries for the common defence, the South was sending her miserable excuses to the Continental Congress—for not supplying her quota of men and arms,—“Because,” said they, “if we do so, our slaves will rise and cut our throats.” And at the same time, they were endeavoring to negotiate a separate peace with the invader, with the proposition to remain neutral during the war, and afterwards join whichever party should prove victor. It is now time for that part of the story of the Revolution to be told as loudly, as plainly and frequently, as the rest of it. It has hitherto been the policy of our history to wink at the imbecility and treachery of the South, and to let them share the honors, although they skulked from the dangers, of the war. Henceforth, while the pencil of truth paints that bright page of our country's history for our emulation and glory, let her also mark one corner—the Southern corner of the picture—with the blackest colors, for our warning and contempt; a spot foul with treachery, cowardice, and every infamy, from its first birth into the nation, and growing fouler and

more infamous with every succeeding development, till its corruption and deformity cover and disgrace the whole scroll.

I pass the consideration of the share the South sustains in supporting the expenses of government in time of peace, for it is like the pauper's share in supporting your town and county expenses. The South is the great pauper-house of the nation; I wish it were not worse — honest poverty is no disgrace. But the infamy of the South cannot be described in decent terms; it is a sink of every ignoble vice and loathsome pollution.

There are no reasons of profit or honor in favor of continued connection with the South, but abundant reasons for separation. Self-respect and self-preservation equally demand it. We are paying dearly every day, in actual cash, for an alliance which no money should hire us to sustain. We are investing money in a partnership of bankruptcy, as though it were a nice "business operation," and are purchasing disgrace and infamy as if they were the choicest luxuries. We, the most industrious and enterprising people of the world, who despise idleness and incapacity as a crime, are squandering our money to support and encourage a horde of loafers and swindlers. We, the most just and liberty-loving people in the world, are lending our strength to an institution of the most matchless tyranny the world ever saw, where unlimited power over an innocent people is held and exercised, in every variety and wantonness of cruelty, by the most degraded and brutal race of petty despots whom long continuance in unpunished crime ever bred. We, belonging to the bravest race in the world, whose fathers threw off the yoke of the most formidable kingdom in the world, while Southern poltroons were skulking in those dismal swamps, and parleying for surrender, are now submitting to the yoke and cowering beneath the bravado of that very province of poltroons, so contemptible as allies. We, a people of noble impulses, of generous sympathies, of magnanimous memories and aspirations, degrade ourselves to be the bloodhounds to chase flying fugitives, chain them, and give them back to the slave-driver's lash. We have suffered our noble and well-instructed young men, who went forth to found anew the free institutions of our fathers, to be "crushed out" on the fields of Kansas. We have suffered our baser and ill-instructed young men to carry into execution the fillibustering plans of the South, and extend the empire of the lash. Our money, our prosperity, our good name, our noble instincts of humanity and manhood, our morality, our religion, all that should be dear to us, are squandered, corrupted, prostituted, to that base, grovelling institution of a



base, grovelling people. Such are the fruits of our connection. Let it be severed! Let all who love the institutions which our forefathers lived, and toiled, and fought, and died to establish — let all who love the higher law which ruled them, and reverence the God who guided and blessed them — unite to maintain that law, and honor their God. Let us cut loose from this Union, which is but a conspiracy of wickedness, and rescue our race from its curse, while yet there is any power and any virtue left to us.

Daily the enemy is gathering strength, and we are losing it. Daily the corruption spreads. Our rich men, merchants, and large manufacturers, bribed by the facility with which their cunning coins money out of the very poverty and recklessness of the South, (money which, in the end, is sure to be legislated and swindled from the pockets of the farmers and merchants of the Free States,) act as the agents and panders of the South. They support and control the policy of the public press, leading it to cheat the public and undermine their principles. They control the pulpit, stifling the voice of true religion, and teaching how to evade or trample on God's higher law — putting into the richest pulpits *South-side parsons*, and such as would *send their mothers into slavery*, and setting the STUARTS and the LORDS over our highest institutions of learning, to poison the principles of the pupils.

When the men of New England take their interests into their own hands, those agents of corruption will no longer be tolerated here—at least, they will not be permitted to practice their vile arts. As our fathers did with the tories, so will the people do with them—*silence* or *expel* them. The spies and tools of the Slave Power are the only dangerous enemies of the State. It is only by their influence that we are deluded at home, divided in Congress, and defeated in Kansas. It is by their private aid and encouragement that a Southern coward and assassin, surrounded by fellow-conspirators and assassins, dares to skulk into your Senator's presence when alone, unguarded and unsuspecting, and prostrate him with a murderous weapon. It was only by their paralyzing and corrupting influence, that every Senator and Representative from the Free States did not combine and inflict summary chastisement and perpetual warning upon that band of assassins.

There is no depth of disgrace to which these minions of Slavery would not humble the honor of the Free States. While the assassin Brooks was caressed, feted, rewarded, and unanimously reëlected, in sanction of his assassin act, BURLINGAME, who, though standing on the slippery ground of a divided constituency, and sure to be stabbed from

behind by those who should have supported him, dared to expose and demonstrate the cowardice of the Southern assassin, was made the object of the bitterest obloquy by the Northern tools of Slavery. The Presidents, Directors, Cashiers and Companies of State street, ranged side by side with the officials of the Custom House, from the Collector down to the tide-waiters and lumpers, and reinforced by every bloodhound commissioner, with his marshals and policemen, and leading the spew and spawn of the tippling-shops and dance-cellar of Ann street, rallied their shameless ranks to the polls to defeat the representative of Northern manhood, and elect (as they nearly did) the representative of Northern degradation, in the person of Appleton, who laid down as his platform, that Northern representatives should so represent the North "as to offend nobody." Poor fool that he was, not to know that the very perfection of his sycophancy would be sure to provoke offence in the slaveholders themselves, as Randolph's lesson to Everett, and Clay's lesson to Choate, might have taught him.

In separation is our only redress and our only safety. In the Union, we cannot right our cause. Our very strength is turned against us. Our wealth fills the treasury of the nation, and is controlled by the Slave Power. The emissaries of Slavery harbor and fatten in our midst. Our few faithful men, whom we send to Congress, must speak our sentiments with bated breath, and with much dilution and disclaimer, for they stand in the shadow of the bludgeon ready to fall upon their heads, and they know there is no redress. Already, the Southern slaveholder may fulfil his threat, and count his slaves from the summit of Bunker Hill; ay, and in that vicinity, they almost outnumber the free men.

In this heart of the Commonwealth, the altar-fires of Liberty must be rekindled, and its beacon flames sent forth to rouse the land. This, I have faith to believe, can be done. I have watched the pulse of the common people (the "mechanics and small-listed farmers," of whom I am one,) and I know that it beats for freedom. In the late campaign, the speakers whom the masses heard most gladly, were those who most nearly proclaimed the principles which we meet to-day to inaugurate. The days when Mr. Garrison and Mr. Phillips would be hissed by a New England audience have long passed. Even the printsellers, who gauge the popular current on a golden metre, have found that out, and they write "CHAMPIONS OF LIBERTY" over heads once denounced as those of "hair-brained fanatics," and expect a harvest of dollars from the operation,—and are not disappointed. They have ceased to garnish the tombs of the old prophets, for the new ones have, at length, aroused

the public ear. We are on the eve of a new revolution, which shall repeat the triumphs, but show the mistakes of the old ; of a new confederation, which shall not only declare the self-evident truths of humanity, but abide by them and establish them, unterrified by menace, unbribed by flattery, undebased by compromises.

## SPEECH OF REV. T. W. HIGGINSON.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

I heard almost every word that was spoken in this hall this morning with pleasure, until Mr. Garrison stood here to thank any body for coming to this platform, or to say to any body that it should be recognized and honored as an act of courage. Mr. President, if such tributes are to be paid, I beg leave, once for all, to renounce my share of them. It is honor enough to stand upon this platform at all, to speak for the cause we advocate to-day ; and if there really were dangers around us, it would be a thing to be still more grateful for. I desire to have it distinctly understood, for one, that I endorse the brave words of OLIVER JOHNSON : " The cause owes me nothing, but I owe every thing to the cause." When I think of all that I have been able to learn from colleges and professors and tutors, and compare it with what the radical Abolitionists have taught me, the first seems too light a thing to weigh in the balance at all. These men whom you deride, friends, as fanatics and as fools, do you know that these men are the *educators* of you and your children ? and do you know that the time will come when Worcester will look back upon this Disunion Convention as the proudest spot in her history since the night when GEORGE THOMPSON, driven out of the first Cradle of Liberty in Boston, came to this second Cradle of Liberty, here in City Hall, and made it rock as it never rocked before ? (Applause.)

We have come here to-day, Mr. President, with very different views on the subject we meet to discuss — with various antecedents, and various habits of mind. Some of us are men who have not voted for years ; others, men who have never failed to vote when they had a chance, and only regretted that the chances were not more frequent ; some have come, like Mr. Garrison, believing the Constitution to be pro-slavery from beginning to end ; others, like yourself, sir, (Dr. Mann,) believing it to be as thoroughly anti-slavery ; and yet others, like myself, believing it to be both of these things, and some things more, — being indeed, as to slavery, what Mr. Bird believes the Philadelphia platform was meant to be, for he says of that, as Talleyrand said of the French

Constitution : — “ It means nothing, and can mean nothing, for I made it myself, on purpose.” (Laughter.) Sir, there is no common creed among us who stand here to-day, except on the subject of anti-slavery, to which we rejoice to have devoted our hearts and lives, and which we follow into disunion, because it leads us there, to-day. No one of us can enumerate all the causes that, gradually working on our minds, have brought us to this clear vision at last, which shows us the nation’s danger and the nation’s salvation. But I know myself, that when I took part in issuing that call, I did not appreciate, as I now do, the importance of the movement. I did not know how near the people of Massachusetts are to disunion. I did not know until I heard the weak reasonings by which they try to shelter themselves against it ; — I did not know until then how thin the soil was growing beneath our feet, and how soon those of us who thought ourselves safest would be likely to break through the crust, and go crumbling into disunion, with our friend here, the senior editor of the *Spy*, at the head. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. Chairman, if I had felt careless or heedless upon this matter — if I had distrusted the instinct — if I had doubted the policy — if I had ignored the facts, that drive us to this position, they would all have been driven back into my soul, revived there for ever, by one hour that I spent, last week, in the Athenæum Hall, in Boston, with the wreck of what was once CHARLES SUMNER. When I stood before that noble form, once so strong and stately, now, even after months of convalescence, so weak and tottering, — when I heard the heroic tones of that unchanged voice, and saw the lightning from those unblenching eyes, but remembered that there might never again be physical force enough for those superb powers to clothe themselves in their native eloquence, — when I saw what CHARLES SUMNER was longing to be, and what he was, O, then that stately form became an altar for me — an altar with live coals from heaven upon it, on which I could pledge myself, once and forevermore, to an eternal war against slavery. (Loud applause.)

Mr. President, there are many weaknesses to which the best of us are subject, and one is, that of believing that men will say after election what they said before. I do not indulge that weakness very freely now ; but when I think of the confessions made by the Republican party three months ago, and the positions of the men who now lead the statesmanship of the Free States, why, I say there is nothing more necessary for our disunion arguments, than to take the scattered sentences of these men, and put them one by one together. The whole argument lies in a nut-shell. Again and again has it been stated by Republican orators and presses,

that "the time might come" when disunion would indeed be necessary. Again and again has the picture been drawn of possible horrors and evils yet to be endured, the end of which might be this. Mr. Banks immortalized himself, if he is destined to immortality at all, by that one sentence, in which he offered, "in a certain contingency, to let the Union slide." Well, all we have come here to-day for is, to see whether the time has not come to let the *contingency* slide. (Applause.)

Has it come? The contingency was this:—"When all political efforts fail—when the North loses its power, when the government is delivered over, bound hand and foot, to the slaveholders—then at last comes the period of disunion." How is it now? Take the confessions of these very men—their statements, public and private, their explanations, their predictions—and we have all we need for the other premise of our argument. Again and again did the same Republican presses and orators volunteer the confession, in the words of the *New York Times*, that the election of Fremont was "the last hope of freedom." These, you say, perhaps, were public statements, and, *after election*, of course, we admit that our orators, like the other orators, may sometimes have spoken for effect. Did the same men speak only for effect, when, in private consultation with personal and political friends, they made the same admissions? Every gentleman of the Republican party here has heard it admitted in conversation among Republicans, before election, that, in case of defeat this time, it would be scarcely possible for the party to rally successfully again. Henry Wilson himself told me that, in Washington street, in the city of Boston, a year ago this last summer. I have heard from high authority, that a few weeks before the election, Mr. Banks said to his friends: "This election decides the politics of the country for the next thirty years." And yet you talk about the Republican party rallying in 1860! Do you know more about it than Henry Wilson? Are you better judges of statistics than Mr. Speaker Banks? If you say those men have been wrong before, and may be wrong now, ask yourselves if they have ever *under-rated* the strength of the party to which they belong.

More than this: are you not aware, those of you who profess to know all about the pulling of the wires, that the recent condition of the parties at the Presidential election, instead of being any thing strange, unexpected, contrary to all the dreams of the Democratic party and of the South, baffling all their calculations and frightening their wits out of them;—instead of this, was a thing expected, predicted, calculated upon by the Democratic party, four years ago? If you do not know it,

I do. If there is a Democrat who is not aware of the fact, let me tell him that his leaders are shrewder men than their Republican compatriots give them credit for being. About the time of the election of General Pierce, I happened to be in conversation with a gentleman who is now a Senator of the United States. He had just come from a conversation with leading Democratic politicians, the chosen advisers of President Pierce, who had met together in New Hampshire, to map out the future policy of the administration. And what was that policy? To identify the Democratic party with the South, and take the consequences. "It is the only source of political power," these men reasoned, and they reasoned from experience. "We must have the South on our side; if we have that, we can risk every thing." "We may lose the North," somebody suggested. "Very likely we shall lose it," was the answer. "We may lose every Northern State," was the remarkable statement that impressed itself upon my memory; "no matter! if we have got the South, we have got the real power, and can always command votes enough to keep it; and the Northern States will either have to come sneaking back to us, or else they will have to dissolve the Union." That is what leading Democratic politicians said four years ago; and you fancy that the men whose foresight predicted that, are baffled and intimidated because their predictions have become true!

We have got to go deeper and deeper yet, before we get hold of the principle that rules the statesmanship of America.

Mr. Chairman, I do not care how small the beginnings, or how trifling the aspect of a movement. We have lived to see a movement that began in an obscure corner, gradually rising until it fills the whole horizon; and are we to be disturbed by a few timid doubters or a few flippant criticisms now? Why, there stood here just now a man who stood alone in the Union twenty-five years ago; and now fourteen hundred thousand voters, in solemn act, record their endorsement of the position of WM. LLOYD GARRISON in 1830. (Applause.) We, fellow-citizens of Worcester, of all others, should know what small beginnings lead to magnificent conclusions; for all of us can remember the time when the whole Free Soil party of Massachusetts could have been brought into this hall, and a careless observer would have passed by the door, and thought there was nobody inside. All the strength of an action depends upon the right which lies behind it. You cannot convince me that I am in the least danger in the position that I take, no matter if I am the weakest of mankind, and stand alone, so long as truth be on my side; let truth be against me, and though I have the world to back me, I am

powerless. We all talk of believing this, but there is not one in a thousand who believes it for one hour out of the twenty-four. Mr. May has told us of that convention which talked so bravely in this hall, twelve years ago, about dissolving the Union. I have seen old Faneuil Hall echo, years ago, in response to sentiments as revolutionary as those we have uttered to-day. The difference between us is, then those sentiments did not mean any thing; now they do. Why was it, that that band of energetic and intellectual men, meeting here, and threatening so bravely, effected nothing? Every one of them drew a glittering blade, and waved it until the whole air seemed to flash with enthusiastic resolution. Why didn't it come to something? Simply because every man of them had a neat little scabbard by his side, and when he had done waving his blade for popular effect, he tucked it back again, and there it has rested ever since. You know what a stir was made when Charles Allen, in 1848, undertook to take his out and air it a little; the others seemed to have all rusted in. But give me a convention of ten men who have drawn the sword for the right, *and thrown away the scabbard*, and I will revolutionize the world. (Loud applause.)

You say, we are "traitors," "fanatics." That is what we came here to be. That is a clear compliment. You say we are "weak," "powerless." Are we? Give us five years, and let us see. You say, "O, they come together, and try to get up a great flame; but some are old flints, that won't strike fire, and some are young steel, that won't give out sparks; the tinder is a little damp, and if we only throw a little more water upon it, they won't get any fire." Well, the steel may be bad, and the flint useless, perhaps; all we ask is, Open the doors of your powder magazine, and let us try! Will you do it?

I tell you, friends and fellow-citizens, that there are men on this platform to whom these thoughts, that are new to many of us to-day, have been the deliberate purpose of years; and there are other men here, who have embraced them so earnestly, that in their hearts the work of years has been done in a day. How many years is it since, in the city of Boston, the action of half a dozen men lined the streets with bayonets from Court Square to Long Wharf, and brought the country to the very verge of civil war? Unprepared, unpremeditated, unpracticed, half a dozen men did that; and there has not been a fugitive slave case in Boston since. Give us another one, another chance to come face to face with the United States government, on such an occasion as that, and see if we have not learned something by the failure. (Applause.)

Mr. Chairman, the difficulty that I find in our operations thus far is, that all the talk in the newspapers, and all the bluster at Washington and out of it, dies away before we have a chance to learn whether it means any thing. Talk of treason! Why, I have been trying for ten years to get the opportunity to commit treason, and have not found it yet. What brings us here to-day is the hope that, by the blessing of Providence, as things are getting further on, somewhere or other, here or at Boston, in Kansas or at Washington, there may be an opening by which we may come face to face with this Slave Power, which calls itself a government, and see if its threats mean any thing.

The reason why the newspapers do not respect this movement is, that they have got out of the habit of respecting any movement. They know their politics don't mean any thing; they suspect other men mean no more. They know they wage war only on paper; they do not know that these men, non-resistants though some of them are, are waging a war that may cost men's lives. It is an easy thing to fight in newspapers—to go abroad in the streets armed only with a corrected proof sheet—(and we have lately had some proof here in Worcester that needed a great deal of correcting;) but when a man is in the position of that Portuguese soldier at the battle of Goa, bearing a barrel of gunpowder in his arms, and a lighted torch in his teeth, and crying out at the same time, “Make way! make way! I carry with me the lives of a thousand men”;—when men, like Garrison and Phillips, are engaged in such a duty, do you suppose they will be frightened when Henry Wilson sends on from Washington, post-haste, and says they had better keep still, they will damage the anti-slavery cause? (Applause.)

No, sir! disunion is not a desire, merely; it is a *destiny*. It is in vain to talk of difficulties in *effecting* the process. The laws of human nature are taking care of those difficulties very rapidly. If our calculations are correct, it will be easier to hasten than to postpone it. The geographical line of division, about which some of our correspondents are so anxious, will determine itself as soon as we are ready for it. We used to call Southern Iowa the darkest spot in the Free States. Last summer, I went along the borders of that State, and laid my hand upon the earth; and every where the soil was hot and hotter with the suppressed volcano. I tell you, let another war come in Kansas, and no power on earth can prevent a border war between Missouri and Iowa. The line will be drawn for us soon enough by the passions of men. The calm deliberations of conven-



tions like these, only prepare the way for it. If we cannot bring it about peaceably, it will come forcibly, that is all. The great forces of nature are sufficient. The vast antagonistic powers are brought into collision—the earthquake comes—and all we disunionists say is, if it is coming, in God's name, let it come quickly! (Applause.)

## SPEECH OF WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

MR. PRESIDENT:

It was my intention to have prepared, with some care and deliberation, the views I desired to express on this grave occasion; but having been ill for the last two weeks, I have not been able to give a moment to the preparation of a set speech. It is true, sir, with me, the subject is familiar; nevertheless, this is no ordinary gathering, and nothing should be hastily uttered on a question so vast, so solemn, and so revolutionary.

Sir, I do not marvel at the general hesitancy which I find in the community to come up to the high position of demanding a dissolution of the Union. I remember how men are born, and how they are bred. I know, in regard to my own case, with what tenacity I clung to this Union, inspired by the patriotic feelings of my early days, and never dreaming that any thing would ever separate me from it, or lead me to desire its dissolution. Men do not change the institutions which have come down to them from the past lightly, or for transient reasons. They must be placed in a trying emergency,—they must feel a strong moral obligation pressing upon them,—they must clearly perceive some great impending evil to be shunned, some great good to be gained,—before they will go into revolution; whether it be a physical revolution, attended with the shedding of human blood, or a moral revolution, attended with the loss of friends and popularity, and the sacrifice of worldly interests. If the great mass of the people were ready to respond, at once, in favor of the dissolution of the Union, with no more light on the subject than they now enjoy, I would give little or nothing for the response, because I should be certain it was the mere impulse of the moment; but when they hesitate, and hold back, and forbear to the last, trusting that there may be some way of escape; when they beg for a little longer time to look at a question involving such momentous consequences, before openly committing themselves, I say, “Well, that is all right and proper—it is human nature.” When such men move, it is with the force of the thunder-

bolt; they are as reliable as the everlasting hills. If, therefore, Disunion be a matter of slow growth—as it is—I am sure it is a true growth, and that every thing is gained thereby. I expect it will go on, slowly gathering to itself friends and advocates, until at last it shall culminate in an all-pervading Northern sentiment, and the great work be easily accomplished. Our revolutionary fathers hesitated long before they threw off the yoke of the mother country. How many years did they hope, and pray, and struggle, for redress of their wrongs, trusting to the justice of England—that Parliament would give heed to their petitions—and that they might be spared the necessity of raising the banner of independence—all the while avowing their loyalty to the British throne! Yet the hour came when, in spite of their veneration for the past, in spite of their feebleness in regard to numbers and resources, and in spite of the colossal power of Great Britain, they said, “We will submit no longer! The time has come for us to throw off the yoke, and declare ourselves free and independent.” The men who, after that time, through cowardice or selfishness, sided with the mother country, were justly branded as Tories. Sir, the race of Tories did not die off with the Revolutionary struggle. In our day, we are passing through the same ordeal. We are engaged in a revolution more far-reaching, more sublime, more glorious, than our fathers ever dreamed of. I know that there are honest men yet struggling with conscientious doubts, who sincerely ask, “Has the time for separation come? May we not be pardoned, if we wait a little longer? Is there not some turn of the wheel whereby Freedom will come uppermost, and Slavery go down”? Such men are to be respected, for they are not animated by a craven spirit. In due time, they will assuredly be with us. But there are others who are not honest; who are actuated by the old tory spirit which was so hostile to the struggle for colonial independence; and these are to be branded as the enemies of mankind.

Mr. President, who is it that will be with us in this great movement for a separation of the North from the South? Let me first tell you who will not be with us; and I think you will agree with me, that the loss of their company is no cause of shame or regret. They are not of us, nor with us, but against us, to a man; in their very enmity, witnesses before God, that our position is one of virtue, of honor, of true humanity, of impartial liberty. The pensioned tools of a pro-slavery Government—puppets who are moved and controlled by “the hand that feeds them”—Northern hunkers and demagogues, who are using

their influence to suppress all anti-slavery agitation — mercenary traders, whose god is the “almighty dollar” — wily politicians, who will sacrifice every thing to their unhallowed lust of office — clerical time-servers, whose only gospel is public sentiment, — these will all join in the cry of “treason,” “fanaticism,” and “infidelity,” and combine their forces to put down a movement that never can be put down — never! never! — because it is impossible to put down God, and of this movement He is the life. (Applause.) Finally, sir, we shall not have the rabble with us! The brutal, the vile, the profane, the mobocratic, instinctively shrink from us, and array themselves on the side of the Union-savers. They do not rally under our banner.

Who will go for a dissolution of this blood-stained Union? Those whose reverence for God is greater than all human institutions; who only ask what is His will, what is His law, and never ask any thing beyond it. I believe that such must and will be for annulling that “covenant with death and agreement with hell,” the Constitution of the United States. All who mean to be true to the cause of liberty will be with us. If they do not yet understand this question, they will soon see that there is no other way of escape, and will join our ranks. What if we are now derided because we are so few? The soul, faithful to principle, never yet took counsel of numbers. He is a dastard, who contemptuously points his finger at a feeble minority struggling for the right, and exclaims, “You have nobody with you!” Sir, I desire to be on the strong side; but I know that the wrong side is never the strong side. I know that strength lies in eternal rectitude. The triumph of a righteous cause is only a question of time. That cause is ours, and it shall one day be gloriously victorious.

Who will rally for Disunion? Those who “remember them that are in bonds as bound with them”; who look at the issue, not by their pleasant firesides, not as an abstract proposition, but on the Southern auction-block and plantation, from the stand-point of the wretched slave, for whose protection there is neither law nor government in any part of our country.

I wish to say a word respecting the letter which has been read to this Convention from HENRY WILSON. I believe he desires to aid the Anti-Slavery movement as far as he can, and at the same time advance his own political ends. The course he is pursuing at Washington forces upon me the conviction, that he is on the retreat. His letter is derogatory to himself, as a professed friend of freedom, to the spirit of the old Puritans and of our revolutionary sires — (applause) — not because it

does not endorse the Disunion movement, but on account of its pervading tone and spirit — its affectation of superior patriotism — its ridiculous glorification of a Union which has only served to extend and strengthen slavery, and to weaken and degrade liberty — its insulting advice to those who are here assembled — and its empty flourish about “Liberty and Union,” as though these can exist in a government constituted like ours! It is a letter which the people of Massachusetts should tie like a millstone around his neck, to sink him in the sea of political oblivion, until he shall have recovered his manhood.

Mr. President, after that tragedy took place in the Senate of the United States, when CHARLES SUMNER was struck down by the ruffian hands of Preston S. Brooks, one of the Richmond journals made the following comments: —

*“These vulgar abolitionists in the Senate are getting above themselves. They have been humored until they forget their position. They have grown saucy, and dare to be impudent to gentlemen. Now, they are a low, mean, scurvy set, with some little book learning, but as utterly devoid of spirit and honor as A PACK OF CURS.*

*“The truth is, that they have been suffered to run too long without collars. THEY MUST BE LASHED INTO SUBMISSION. Sumner, in particular, ought to have nine-and-thirty early every morning. He is a great strapping fellow, and could stand the cowhide beautifully. Brooks frightened him, and at the first blow of the cane, he bellowed like a bull-calf.*

*“There is the blackguard Wilson, an ignorant Natick cobbler, swaggering in excess of muscle, and absolutely dying for a beating. Will not somebody take him in hand? Hale is another huge, red-faced, sweating scoundrel, whom some gentleman should kick and cuff until he abates something of his impudent talk.*

*“Southern gentlemen must protect their own honor and feelings. It is an idle mockery to challenge one of these scullions. It is equally useless to attempt to disgrace them. They are insensible to shame, and can be brought to reason only by an application of cowhide or gutta serena. Let them once understand that for every vile word spoken against the South, THEY WILL SUFFER SO MANY STRIPES, and they will soon learn to behave themselves like DECENT DOGS — they can never be gentlemen.”*

Judging from his disclaimers and protests in the Senate, and the tone of his letter before us, it would almost seem as if HENRY WILSON were learning to behave — I will not say like a “decent dog,” but very submissively in the presence of his Southern overseers.

Sir, there are those who affect to regard this as a very contemptible movement. It is so, according to “the wisdom of this world;” but it is not contemptible as to its object, or the spirit which animates it, or the principle by which it is guided. It is no more contemptible than was the advent of Jesus, or the conflict of Luther with the Romish Church, or the struggle of our fathers to throw off the British yoke. Now, in all ages, have mankind been quickened, and aided onward in the right?

Not by numbers, but by the simple truth — espoused not by the rich and powerful, but enunciated and enforced by a solitary witness here and there, and gradually obtaining mastery over all opposition. I am sure that we have the truth with us, and, therefore, that power which moves the world is committed to our trust — let those scoff who will.

Reference has been made to a petition which was sent to Congress, a few years since, from the town of Haverhill, in this State, and presented by JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, asking that body to take measures for a peaceful dissolution of the Union. How many names were appended to it? Thirty! Yet, though it was a solitary petition, signed by only thirty obscure individuals, into what convulsions were both houses of Congress thrown, and what terror and rage pervaded the whole Southern portion of the Confederacy, in consequence of its presentation! And why was this? Simply because it was like the hand-writing which Belshazzar saw upon the wall of his palace — “WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE AND FOUND WANTING.” To the slaveholders, it was as the voice of God, saying, “Your covenant with death shall be annulled” — and well might they tremble!

The air is filled with objections to a movement of this kind. I am neither surprised nor disquieted at this. One of these is of a very singular nature, and it is gravely urged as conclusive against Disunion. It is to this effect: we must remain in the Union, because it would be inhuman in us to turn our backs upon the millions of slaves in the Southern States, and leave them to their fate! Men who have never been heard of in the Anti-Slavery ranks, or who are ever submitting to a compromise of principle, have their bowels wonderfully moved all at once with sympathy for the suffering slave! Even our esteemed friend THEODORE PARKER, (who deals in no cant,) says in his letter, that he cannot consent to cut himself off from the slave population. Now, we who are engaged in this movement claim to be equally concerned for the liberation of the slave. If we have not yet proved our willingness to suffer the loss of all things, rather than to turn and flee, God knows that we are prepared to bear any new cross that He, in his providence, may be disposed to lay upon us. For one, I make no parade of my anxiety for the deliverance of those in bondage; but I do say, that it strikes me as remarkable that those who, for a quarter of a century, have borne the heat and burden of the day, should have the imputation cast upon them of intending to leave four millions of slaves in their chains, by seeking the overthrow of this Union! I find, even in the *Spy* of this

city, the same absurdity reiterated. After referring to this Convention in very respectful terms, it says : —

“We are as sensible, we believe, as they are, of the wrongs inflicted upon the North by the Slave Power. We believe that they are such as would afford a full justification to us to cut asunder from *them*, if we could do it consistently with our duties and obligations to others. But there is a large slave population in the South, and a still larger, nominally free, non-slaveholding population, whose wrongs are as mountains to mole-hills, compared with ours. They have become politically connected with us, and on the continuance of that connection rests the only hope of their deliverance, for a long period to come. It would, in our estimation, be unchristian and unmanly — it would be selfish and *cowardly*, in us, to forsake them in the time of their great need, and leave them to their cruel fate, for the sake of relieving ourselves from the comparatively small evils which we suffer in consequence of the connection.”

Now, all I have to say is, that this is a man of straw ! I have no idea of forsaking the slave, under any circumstances. The slaveholder knows it, and the country knows it ; and I am sure that those who are associated in this movement intend to continue the conflict till every yoke is broken. I declare that this talk of leaving the slave to his fate is not a true representation of the case ; and it indicates a strange dullness of comprehension with regard to our position and purpose. What ! is it to forsake the slave when I cease to be the aider and abettor of his master ? (Cheers.) What ! when the North is pressing down upon four millions of slaves, like an avalanche, and we say to her, “ Take off that pressure — stand aside — give the slave a chance to regain his feet, and assert his freedom ! ” is that turning our backs upon him ? (Applause.) Here, for example, is a man engaged in highway robbery, and another man is acting as an accessory, without whose aid the robber cannot succeed. In saying to the accomplice, “ Hands off ! don’t aid the villain ! ” shall I be told that this is enabling the highwayman to rob with impunity ? What an absurdity ! Are we not trying to save the pockets of all travellers from being picked, in seeking to break up all connection with highway robbery ? (Applause.)

Now, sir, we go for Disunion, because, while the Union continues, there is no hope for the slave ; because, with this Union, it is possible to hold four millions of bondmen in chains, and impossible without it ; because the whole country is pledged to guard and defend slavery where it now exists. Massachusetts is virtually a slave State to-day, by the compromises of the Constitution ; therefore it is that every fugitive slave, touching her soil, must be secreted or flee. Plymouth Rock has crumbled into dust ; it can afford him no protection. Bunker Hill and Faneuil Hall are equally impotent. We have been told, to-day, that no

fugitive has been arrested in Boston since the seizure of Anthony Burns. Why not? Because we have been afraid to have another case come up, and every fugitive who comes to Boston is counselled to make his way to Canada.

Mr. HIGGINSON—When a fugitive comes to Worcester, we always advise him to stay. (Applause.)

Mr. GARRISON—It remains to be seen whether Worcester will be able to protect the slave, when seized by the United States Government; and when that time shall come, it will be Worcester out of the Union, not Worcester in the Union, that will break his fetters. But the *Spy* says, we have power to relieve both ourselves and the slave, under the Constitution. I will thank any man to show me how and when this can be done. I believe the reverse of this to be the exact truth.

For one, I am here to say, that I am for no union with slaveholders. No union with them in the Church, none in the State, but an eternal divorce from them, while they remain slaveholders.

What is the American Union? Has it form and substance, or is it something which belongs to the imagination—a mere piece of dough, which every man may mould and fashion as he thinks proper, without regard to its original design or positive provisions? Men talk of interpreting the Constitution as they understand it. Does it never occur to them that this is a game at which two can play? If they may interpret it *ad libitum*, so may the slaveholders. Now, sir, I assume that we have such a thing as the American Union; that it has height and breadth and exact dimensions; that the nation understands what it is, and has been from its origin, in regard to its slaveholding conditions. Now let us see who are for its perpetuity. I turn to the Southern slaveholders, and ask, “Are you for a dissolution of the Union?” and they are for hanging me up by the neck for raising the question! (Laughter.) True, they threaten, in case certain things shall be done, that they will separate from us; but, mark you! they are in favor of perpetuating “the Union as it is,” and as our fathers made it. I turn to all that remains of the Whig party, and ask, “Are you in favor of preserving the Union?” and they exclaim, “Yes, to the end of time!” I turn to the Democratic party, and ask, “Are you in favor of preserving the Union?” and they reply, “Accursed be he who is not!” I turn to the American party, and ask, “Are you for this ‘glorious’ Union?” “Yes, until the crack of doom.” Finally, I turn to the Republican party, and say, “And you, also, go for the Union?” And they make the loudest noise, and throw up their caps the highest, in its behalf.

Now, either these parties mean by "Union" the same thing, or they do not. HENRY WILSON, when he says, "I am for perpetuating the Union," means by it what the South means, or he does not. All these parties mean the same thing, or they do not. If they do, then I stain them all with the blood of four millions of slaves, who lie crushed and bleeding beneath the Union. If they do not, then I say, there is treachery somewhere; because they are using the same word, representing the old idea of the Union, as understood and carried out by our fathers. Who is it that is playing falsely?

My reasons for leaving the Union are, first, because of the nature of the bond. I would not stand here a moment, were it not that this is with me a question of absolute morality — of obedience to the "higher law." By all that is just and holy, it is not optional whether you or I shall occupy the ground of Disunion. It is not a matter of political expediency or policy, or even of incongruity of interests between the North and the South. It strikes deeper, it rises higher than that. This is the question: — Are we of the North not bound in a Union with slaveholders, whereby they are enabled to hold four millions of our countrymen in bondage, with all safety and impunity? Is not Massachusetts in alliance with South Carolina, Rhode Island with Georgia, Maine with Alabama, Vermont with Mississippi, giving the strength of this nation to the side of the dealer in human flesh? My difficulty, therefore, is a moral one. The Union was formed at the expense of the slave population of the land. I cannot swear to uphold it. As I understand it, they who ask me to do so, ask me to do an immoral act — to stain my conscience — to sin against God. How can I do this? I care not what consequences may be predicted. It is a sin to "strike hands with thieves, and consent with adulterers." I aver that the compact made by our fathers, in relation to its slaveholding guarantees, is a compact more wicked than was ever made since the world began.

I press it upon the consciences of all who hear me — "You claim to be moral, humane, Christian men. Tell me, what is the Constitution of the United States, which you swear to uphold? What is this boasted Union, which you are determined to perpetuate? Does it not provide that there shall be a Slave Oligarchy in Congress, representing three-fifths of the slave population? Is there not a provision for hunting fugitive slaves every where through the land? Is not the entire power of the nation pledged to keep the slaves in their chains, by suppressing all insurrections? If these things be so, I ask you, as humane men, as Christian men, as anti-slavery men, how, in the name of God, it is pos-



sible for you to support such "an agreement with hell," for one hour, and then wipe your lips and say, "We are guilty of no sin"? It may be that you feed and clothe the fugitive, and help him on his way; you generously contribute to the anti-slavery cause, and actively resist the extension of slavery. All this shall be put down to your credit. But do you not recollect the case of the young man who came to Jesus, and asked what good thing he might do that he might have eternal life? Jesus said, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness." "All these have I kept from my youth up," was the exulting reply. But Jesus said, "*If thou wilt be perfect*, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and then shalt thou have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." And he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. It is precisely so here. You have performed many commendable deeds; still, one thing is lacking:—you have not ceased to strike hands with the enslavers of your fellow-men, under the Constitution of the United States.

Sir, this is a wonderful book that I hold in my hand — [referring to the Bible.] While I reject the absurd idea of its plenary inspiration, I find so much truth in it, so much of the prophetic spirit in it, such burning denunciations of oppression in it, that my pulses thrill when I read its solemn warnings and stern rebukes. It seems as if the prophet Isaiah must have foreseen the time when the framers of the American Constitution came together to form this government; for how truly has he described the spirit of the American people, and the horrible compact into which they entered at that time? How applicable are both his description and reproof to us as a nation!—

"Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people. Because ye have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."

This describes, in the most graphic manner, the character of the American Union, and the language of the people concerning it. They make lies their refuge, and imagine themselves safe. But judgment shall yet be executed; and He who sits in the heavens will rend asunder the fabric so proudly reared by our fathers, leaving not one stone upon another.

I am opposed to this Union, because it is an insane experiment to reconcile those elements which are eternally hostile. God has never made it possible for Liberty and Slavery to live together in partnership. Between the North, with her free labor, free press, free schools, free institutions—and the South, with her slave labor, and mental darkness, and bloody despotism—there can be no union, and there never has been one, except in name. We are only palming off a sham before the world, when we affect to regard it as something worthy of veneration and perpetuity.

Of what value is it to us, as freemen, in the slave States? What protection does it give? None whatever. HENRY WILSON is not for sundering the Union; yet HENRY WILSON has a rope round his neck in one half of the Union, as the outspoken advocate of the slave. He dare not go South, even to promulgate his Republican doctrines; for it would be at the peril of his life. There is not a man at the South who enjoys liberty of conscience, of speech, or of the press, as against slavery. Now tell me why, knowing all this, you still cry out in favor of the Union? Does not the South lay her tyrannous hands upon all the colored citizens of Massachusetts who are found upon her soil, thrust them into her dungeons, and sell them into eternal slavery if they are not ransomed? As a Massachusetts man, I am for no such Union as that—God forbid!

Again, I am for the overthrow of the Union, because of the avowed determination of the South to extend and perpetuate her accursed slave system, *ad infinitum*. With one voice, she declares that she will never yield one jot or tittle in this struggle for emancipation; that she means to go forward, and overthrow every barrier to the diffusion of chattel slavery throughout this continent; that she hates all our free institutions, and hopes to subvert them. I know what is the spirit of the South, and I take her at her word, and say, “You have shown that the time has come for us to separate. Be it so!”

Sir, there is no power in the United States government, or in any State government, to give us any protection in the slave States. We have a right to go there, and denounce slavery as a curse and a crime; a natural right, which is God-given; a constitutional right, by the original compact. But if we go there, and attempt to exercise this right, we are subjected to every description of personal insult and outrage. We may make our appeal for redress to the United States government, or to the State government, but we shall plead in vain.

Again, I am for the speedy overthrow of the Union, because, while it exists, I see no end to the extension of slavery. I see every thing in the

hands of the Slave Power now. I see the national government for four years to come—all the resources of the country—every dollar in the treasury—the army, the navy, the judiciary, every thing, in its grasp; and I know that, with all these means and facilities, and the disposition to use them, nothing can successfully contend against it.

I am sure of another thing—that when the North shall withdraw from the Union, there will be an end to Southern fillibustering, and schemes of annexation. Then the tables will be turned, and we shall have the slaveholders at our doors, crying for mercy. Rely upon it, there is not an intelligent slaveholder at the South, who is for the dissolution of the Union. I do not care what the folly or insanity of the Southern nullifiers may be; I do not care how much they hate the North, and threaten to separate from us; they are contemptible numerically, and only make use of these threats to bring the North down on her knees, to do their bidding, in order to save the Union. Not one of them is willing to have the cord cut, and the South permitted to try the experiment. If it be otherwise, God grant that she may soon take this step, and see whether she will be able to hold a single slave one hour after the deed is done!

The dissolution of the Union will paralyze the power of the master, and, therefore, render emancipation certain, by a geographical necessity. The line,—where will it run? It will run between freedom and slavery, wherever that is; between free labor and slave labor; between where man is owned as a slave, and where men own themselves, and have power to take care of themselves, as free laborers. That is where the line will run. There will be no Atlantic ocean rolling between; but the slave will be able, at a single stride, to step over the line into a free and independent republic, where he will be protected against all pursuit. Under such circumstances, no border State can long remain a slave State, in the nature of things.

Yes, the dissolution of the Union will smite slavery to the dust. What next will follow? The jubilee having come, we shall be free every where; free at the South, free at the North; with free labor, free schools, a free press in common. With universal freedom, we shall then organize a magnificent Union from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in which there shall be neither tyrant nor slave, and it shall go well with us as a people. (Applause.)

Dr. Wayland, of Providence, has expressed my views and feelings entirely, in a speech which he delivered on the Kansas-Nebraska bill. I beg leave to read a single extract:—

“I value the Union as much as any man. I would cheerfully sacrifice to it every thing but truth, justice and liberty. When I must surrender these, as

the price of the Union, the Union becomes at once a thing which I abhor. To form a union for the sake of perpetuating oppression, is to make myself an oppressor. This I cannot be, for I love liberty as much for my neighbor as for myself. To sacrifice my liberty for the sake of the Union, is impossible. God made me free, and I cannot be in bondage to any man. \* \* \* *The Union, itself, becomes to me an accursed thing, if I must first steep it in the tears and blood of those for whom Christ died.*"

The Union is steeped "in the tears and blood of those for whom Christ died," and it is maintained only "at the sacrifice of truth, justice and liberty"—therefore I pronounce it "an accursed thing," and treat it accordingly.

Mr. President, this theme is exhaustless. I cannot enter even upon the threshold of the argument on this occasion. But I will thank any man who will show me how we can rationally hope to restrain the Slave Power in any direction, whilst the Union exists, and the present determination of the South remains to perpetuate slavery at all hazards. Until that be done, I shall be an incorrigible Disunionist. I tell you, men of the North, as long as you proclaim in the ear of the Slave Power that you never mean to yield up this Union, come what may of outrage and villany in its train, you thereby surrender every thing,—manhood, justice, liberty, reverence for God,—and grant an unlimited license for the extension of slavery over this continent. For remember this: the Slave Power conquers by intimidation. We of the North are without courage—without backbone—and the Slave Power has long since found it out. We believe in preserving the Union, not in the living God; and this is damnable idolatry;—therefore it is that we are ever driven to the wall by our Southern masters.

Men of the North! you are constantly assuring the Slave Power that you will yield up every thing to save the Union. You are infatuated! Say to the South that there is a point beyond which she cannot pass, except at the cost of the Union; that there is something dearer to you than the Union—namely, the preservation of liberty for yourselves and your children, and reverence for the eternal law of God. Tell her that if she passes beyond that point, she will find no Union existing. Nay, wait for no fresh outrage, but declare the Union to be now at an end! If our fathers made it, for the sake of self-protection and self-interest, may we not unmake it, for the sake of true religion, humanity and freedom? We have tried the experiment for almost three score years, and it has proved a failure. Like causes must produce like effects. The living and the dead must not be

bound together. If we do not separate, the liberties of us all will be buried in a common grave, and not even a remnant shall be saved. "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what fellowship hath light with darkness? or how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Whoever else may falter, or counsel delay, or take refuge in hypocrisy, I go for uncompromising hostility to slavery every where, and, therefore, for NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS. (Applause.)

## SPEECH OF WENDELL PHILLIPS.

MR. PRESIDENT:

We are assembled to consider the expediency of seeking a dissolution of the Union. For my part, I am for the dissolution of the Union, and I seek it as an Abolitionist. I seek it, first and primarily, to protect the slave. My second motive is, to protect the white race. Primarily, it is an Anti-Slavery measure. I object to the letter of Mr. WILSON, and to all that argument of which his letter is a type, that it is treason to the Anti-Slavery movement—to the philosophy of it. No man deserves the name of an Abolitionist who, in arguing the slave question, sets out with the assumption that any human institution is to be saved at all hazards, come what may of the slave. The gist of Mr. WILSON'S letter is, that in no possible contingency, for no possible purpose, will he allow the Union to be touched. He is not a fit leader in the Anti-Slavery enterprise, if he lays down any such principle. I do not know where my opposition to slavery will lead me; but I know this, that wherever it leads me, I will go, until I reach the slave. (Loud applause.) The Abolitionist gives no pledge to his fellow, except this—that he will make his way over every obstacle, in order to reach the slave. In Mr. WILSON'S letter, and in that whole tone of argument of which it is the representative, the Union is a foregone conclusion. That is anchored. No matter how much you may prove against it,—no matter how much the course of events may open your eyes to new interests and duties,—no matter what form the question may take,—you must pledge yourself not to touch the Union. How absurd the pretence of argument with a man who has made that pledge at the outset!—he is not fit to argue. On so momentous a question, we have no right to consider any thing but truth and justice as settled—all mere institutions are afloat. We are launching a great argument; sounding on and on in the voyage of statesmanship, with nothing but despair behind. We

do not know where our vessel will take us. Common sense requires that we should keep every door open, free to go wherever the issue leads us. Slavery is so momentous an evil, that in its presence all others pale away. No thoughtful man can deem any sacrifice too great to secure its abolition. The safety of the people is the highest law. In this battle, we demand a clear field and the use of every honorable weapon. Even the monuments of our fathers are no longer sacred, if the enemy are concealed behind them.

This, Mr. President, is my first claim upon every man who has an Anti-Slavery purpose. One of the greatest, if not the greatest question of the age, is that of free labor. I do not know, — no man can prophecy, — what sacrifices it will demand, no human sagacity divine what shape it will acquire in the kaleidoscope of the future. Nobody can foresee the combinations that will be necessary in order to secure liberty, and turn law into justice. The pledge we make to each other, as Abolitionists, is, that to this slave question, embodying as it does, the highest justice and the most perfect liberty, synonymous as it is with Right, Manhood, Justice, with pure Religion, a free Press, an impartial Judiciary, and a true Civilization, we will sacrifice every thing. If any man dissents, he is not, in any just sense, an Abolitionist. If he has not studied the question enough to know, that it binds up in itself all considerations of government, then he is not worthy of being called an Abolitionist. The fate of four millions of slaves, linked as it is with the welfare of the white race, with the purity of religion, with freedom of conscience and thought, with civil liberty, with an impartial judiciary, with personal character, with all civil rights, is a question deserving of every sacrifice. Then, when you come to the Union — what is it? This momentous something, to which every possible importance of the slave question is to be sacrificed — what is it? What has the Union ever done? Where are its merits? Who knows them? Who has stated them? I know of but one; it has preserved peace between thirty-one States; — that is all its virtue!

Mrs. ABBY KELLEY FOSTER (interrupting) — Is that a merit?

Mr. PHILLIPS — They who look on peace as a necessary condition of all progress or civilization would doubtless so regard it. For my own part, I do not think that peace between sin, and servility masquerading as virtue, is a benefit! (Loud applause.) I think, when Massachusetts undertook to be the bloodhound of South Carolina, in order that there might be peace between the two States, it was an exceedingly doubtful benefit. But what else has the Union ever done? Some claim that she

is the mother of commerce. I doubt it. I question whether the genius and energy of the Yankee race are not the parent of commerce and the fountain of wealth, much more than the Union. That race, in Holland, first created a country, and then, standing on piles, called modern commerce into being. That race, in England, with territory just wide enough to keep its eastern and western harbors apart, monopolized for centuries the trade of the world, and annexed continents only as treasure-houses wherein to garner its wealth. Who shall say that the same blood, with only New England for its anchorage, could not drag the wealth of the West into its harbors? Who shall say that the fertile lands of Virginia and the Mississippi enriched her because they wished to do so, and not because they were compelled? As long as New England is made of granite and the nerves of her sons of steel, she will be, as she always has been, the brain of North America, united or dis-united; and harnessing the elements, steam and lightning, to her car of conquest, she will double the worth of every prairie acre by her skill, cover ocean with her canvas, and gather the wealth of the Western hemisphere into her harbors.

I dispute, then, the value of the Union; I do not believe in it. Grant all it claims as the parent of wealth, it has not produced MEN. DANIEL WEBSTER said that the virtue of the colonial institutions was, that they produced WASHINGTON. The sin of the Union is, that it manufactured WEBSTER. (Laughter and applause.) Carlyle says, the test of governments is the *men* they make. Where are our *men*? The colonies produced the Revolutionary men; in the "full tide of successful experiment," we have resulted in Caleb Cushing and Franklin Pierce, and the knaves of the present day! That is the full bloom of the Union!

The highest test of government is as a school. It is noble men that prove noble governments. Where are they? The education of the nation, political and civil,—that is the government. What has it amounted to? I do not consider that rickety machine at Washington as the government. The government is in the elements which produce the national character, and these elements the Union, so far as it has had any power, has influenced to the result of producing such a people as now cover these thirty-one States. The Union! Why, it has so chilled the heart of Massachusetts, that, like a whipped spaniel, she skulked among her hills when her Senator was beaten almost to death in the national capitol. The Union! It has brought thirty States to the level, that they see, crowded in the brief history of Kansas, every despotic aggression which chased the Stuarts out of England, and

changed her government; and yet these tame States vote the same policy into office, after such an exhibition! The Union, to which Mr. WILSON undertakes to sacrifice every possibility of the slave question, has yet to find the first good thing that it has done for twenty millions of people. For Longfellow, the Union is a gallant bark that outrides the storm. A storm! When have we met one till now? Fair weather, halcyon seas, constant prosperity, have been our history;—a boat with every other plank torn off, or a Chinese junk, would have found it difficult to sink. (Laughter.) This is the first storm that has ever assailed her, and now men counsel giving up the voyage and skulking into harbor, for fear of being sunk! Who cares for the “forge” or “heat” in which were shaped the “anchors” of such despair? What is a government? It is a machine for education;—and it is *free speech* that endangers this government! *Free speech*, the highest attribute of man;—and yet it is the discussion of a great moral question that endangers the government! Then the sooner it goes to pieces, the better! As JOHN QUINCY ADAMS said to CHARLES SUMNER, when he stood by his sick bed in Boston, “I hope to go back to Washington, in order to teach this Mr. DANIEL WEBSTER that there is something better than the Constitution of the United States,—the justice and liberty which it was intended to preserve.” (Loud cheers.)

I object, therefore, altogether, to this exaggerated value placed upon the Union. I do not believe in it. I do not believe history can be made hereafter to bear witness to any high value in the Union. This has been a decent government in its day, but it is pregnant with momentarily bad results. It has prostituted the pulpit,—it has made the people cowards,—it has made slavery triumphant,—it has made literature vassal and corrupt,—it has transformed twenty millions of people into slave-catchers. What a history! We launched out with the popular determination that the territory of the Union should be secured to liberty. The spirit with which we set out, under the ordinance of 1787, made all national territory sacred to liberty. We came down to 1819, and cowardice, born of the Union, gave up half; we came down to 1852, and treason, in the garb of cowardice, gave up the whole to slavery. Behold the history of the Union! Willingly do I join issue with the Union-worshippers on the value of their idol. I say, the Fugitive Slave Law was not possible, and could not have been executed, in the city of Boston, in 1789; it was executed there in 1850. Apply the torture of any circumstances to John Jay, Luther Martin, Chancellor Wythe, Patrick Henry, and never could you extort such speeches as Daniel Webster



made the last two years of his life. The Union—behold the value of it! If property be every thing—if, as Daniel Webster said, the whole purpose of government is to protect property,—I do not know but possibly banks make better dividends with the Union than they would without, though of that I have serious doubts; but if men be the object of government,—if liberty be the object of government,—if high thought, high character, a noble party, a noble State, with noble impulses, be the test of government, this Union is a failure; for the character of this nation has been so barbarized in fifty years, that we must hide our faces when we compare the Senate of to-day with that over which even Aaron Burr presided. Look at the outrage on CHARLES SUMNER! Men have been assassinated before. If a man trusts himself with gold in the purlieus of great cities, he is very likely to be assassinated. One who quarrels with drunken bullies in the haunts of vice, risks assassination. But did you ever see before, in the Senate chamber, the focus of a civilized State, the Capitol on which millions of eyes are fixed,—did you ever see an assassination there, with half a score of what are called the “statesmen” of the land looking on, still and silent? I undertake to say, that in view of all the circumstances, the outrage on CHARLES SUMNER is not to be paralleled in the history of civilized States. You never saw the assassination, in cool blood, of an unarmed man, with twelve of his peers, the foremost men in office, in a civilized community, present, and not an arm lifted in his defence; and yet you now see a State, and, perhaps, one half the whole country, daring to vindicate and applaud such an act! That is the barbarism to which the Union has brought these States! You know it stands out in all history as the atrocious crime which countervailed all the merits of Oliver Cromwell, that he undertook to put his military boot on the Speaker’s mace in the House of Commons. Every man who has written history since has regarded that as the lowest point which English history has ever touched. That very act was repeated on the virgin soil of Kansas, and it hardly waked a ripple on the calm sea of American life. Such is the result of a Union to which men are told to sacrifice justice, liberty and honor, the welfare of the slave, and an effectual resistance to the Slave Power! I do not believe in it. I would like to have those men who are ringing perpetual changes on the Union come here, and tell us what good the Union has ever done. It has made our large cities the scenes of riot and of fugitive slave surrenders; it has filled our pulpits with Deweys and Adamsses; it has filled our literature with Hillards, and Pierponts, and Bancrofts. I cursa

the Union in behalf of the white man, as well as a friend of the black race. There never was a greater mistake than this idolatry of the juggle of a Union, and never until we cut loose from it shall we have any hope of a system of honorable government, or any right to respect ourselves.

I do not, then, tremble to approach the question of breaking up the Union. I have no faltering fear, no timid balancing of arguments;—my inmost soul is penetrated with the conviction that it is a magnificent conspiracy against justice, and accursed of God. (Loud applause.) Every page of our history since '89 is black with the Union. There is not a page of it to which an American can recur with any pride or honor; and when a pen as impartial as that of HILDRETH writes that history, you see it—every man must see it. It is nothing but the vain-glorious eulogy of Fourth of July orators; the swollen selfishness of wealth eager for more gain; of Commerce, crying “Hush!” in order to have customers; of merchants, in trembling deference to somebody out of whom they expect to make a dollar of profit;—it is only petty lawyers like Curtis, who imagine, because they can draw writs, they can meddle with statesmanship, (laughter and applause,) that have undertaken to show the value of the Union. It is rotten all over! It is one great sore! It has proved on a magnificent scale, as if written by the finger of God “betwixt Orion and the Pleiades,” that Lamartine was right when he said, “Man never fastened one end of a chain round the neck of his brother, that God’s own hand did not fasten the other end round the neck of the oppressor.” (Cheers.) It is one great lazar-house of slave and slaveholder, with the North buying coward bread in office by dastardly silence, and vociferating “Great is the Union!” in voices thick with blood.

I go for the dissolution of the Union, first, as an Anti Slavery measure. I would put it to every man who loves the Constitution of the United States in its essential features, if he would vote for that instrument to-day, as it stands? I do not believe there is a Republican who hears me, who, if he were standing to-day, as men stood in 1789, and this Constitution lay on a table before him, and he were asked, “Will you vote for it?”—I do not believe, I say, that there is a Republican who hears me who would vote for it. You may bolster up the Constitution as something which, having come down to you from the fathers of the government, you are bound to support; but is there a man who, if he could have his choice, would to-day say “Ayè” to that Constitution? You know there is not; and every argument

that undertakes to make it out faultless is only an attempt to hold it up because it exists, and because men suppose it for their interest to maintain it.

In the first place, my opposition to the Union is one of personal honor and duty;—and this is the strongest consideration—the nucleus;—all the others are incidental, secondary. It is a question of personal honor and duty with me. I am not going into the question of the technicalities of the Constitution,—I do not care now about them. For the purposes of this hour, we may take it for granted that the Constitution, as at present interpreted and executed, is a pro-slavery Constitution—used by Slavery for its own purposes; that the power of dictating the course to be pursued under that Constitution is in the hands of the Slave Power. You know what that Slave Power is. I do not mean by that phrase an exclusively Southern power. The Slave Power is here in Worcester just as much as in Charleston, S. C. The Slave Power is three-fold; it has the power of wealth—two thousand millions of dollars invested in slaves, drawing to it the sympathy of all other kinds of capital. That is the first power, and in the nineteenth century, the money sway is omnipotent. Then it has, secondly, the aristocracy of the Constitution; and, thirdly, the prejudice against color. The aristocracy of the Constitution!—where have you seen an aristocracy with half its power? You may take a small town here in New England, with a busy, active population of 2500, and three or four such men as Gov. Aiken, of South Carolina, riding leisurely to the polls, and throwing their visiting cards in for ballots, will blot out the entire influence of that New England town in the Federal Government. That is your Republicanism! Then, when you add to that the element of prejudice, which is concentrated in the epithet “nigger,” you make the three-strand cable of the Slave Power—the prejudice of race, the omnipotence of money, and the almost irresistible power of aristocracy. That is the Slave Power. Whatever you make of the Constitution, its administration is in the hands of the Slave Power. When HENRY WILSON goes up to the Senate of the United States,—if he wishes a part of that Government,—he must vote men into office, and vote money to carry on the Government; and he knows if he carries it on, he carries on the Slave Power. He knows that when he pays John McLean, the Judge of Ohio, he pays him for returning fugitive slaves. (“Hear,” “hear.”) When he votes Judge Leavitt’s salary, he votes to pay him for that trick which plunged Margaret Garner back into the hell of bondage, and

cheated the State of Ohio out of her rights; and I want to know when or where the Republican party, or any other party, ever avowed their purpose to be, to get the power of this Government into their hands in order that no dollar in its treasury shall be allowed to go for the support of the Slave Power? Until they do this, politics is personally dishonorable to an Abolitionist. It is paying a Government, two-thirds of which is directly, and the other third indirectly, covered all over with pro-slavery service, from the Judge on the Supreme Bench, down to the Marshal in the Courts. The bill which was paid for returning Anthony Burns was so mixed up with the salaries of officers, that it could not be disintegrated without stopping the whole appropriation bill. I deem the noblest piece of work the Republican party ever attempted was the effort to stop the appropriation bill. Chief Justice Marshall said once, that whenever Senators were omitted to be chosen, the United States Government fell to pieces. Why do you not let it fall to pieces? As at present constituted, it is the right arm of the Slave Power, and you know it. South Carolina cannot breathe nor get her food a day out of the Union. Bankrupt, she talks of "walking out of the Union"! Let her beg money to buy the crutches she stands on first! (Laughter and applause.)

I say, sir, it is a matter of personal honor and duty with me. I do not see how any man can volunteer the slightest amount of personal or pecuniary support to a Government which, whatever was its intent in 1789, is now practically a pro-slavery institution. I thanked God when I looked into the eyes of ANTHONY BURNS, and, in reply to his agonized inquiry, "Can you do nothing for me?" was obliged to answer, "Nothing" — I thanked God that at least I could say, "I never lifted a finger to build one stone of the Government that is resting upon your heart to-day." That Government returned ANTHONY BURNS; that Government is organized year after year, and every dollar in its treasury is spent in direct or in indirect support of slavery. You know a religious man, for instance, protests against idolatry, and the support of idolatrous Governments in Asia. Here is a Government just as much permeated by slavery as China or Japan with idolatry, and I cannot vote under it, nor voluntarily support it. I do not care for parchments; they are not the Government. There are elements beneath the parchment that fashion the Government, and among these elements, first and beyond all others, is this Slave Power, which controls the Union. I do not know what it may be ten or fifteen years hence; I do not know what it may be when it is changed; I only know

what it is now, and I say, no Abolitionist can support it. If there is any man who can tell me how, I should like to have him do so.

Then, again, how is the Republican party ever to gain supremacy in the Government? Certainly, by turning every atom of patronage and pecuniary profit in the keeping of the Federal Government to the support of freedom. You know that the policy has been always acted upon, ever since Washington,—and it has been openly avowed ever since Fillmore,—that no man was to receive any office who was not sound on the slavery question. You remember the debate in the Senate, when that was distinctly avowed to be the policy of Mr. Fillmore. You remember Mr. Clay letting it drop out accidentally, in debate, that the slaveholders had always closely watched the Cabinet, and kept a majority there, in order to preserve the ascendancy of slavery. This is the policy which, in the course of fifty years, has built up the Slave Power. Now, how is the Republican party ever to beat that Power down? By reversing that policy, in favor of freedom. CASSIUS CLAY said to me, two years ago, “If you will allow me to have the patronage of this Government five years, and exercise it remorselessly, down to New Orleans,—never permit any one but an avowed Abolitionist to hold office under the Federal Government,—and I will revolutionize the slave States themselves in two Administrations.” That is a scheme of efficient politics. But the Republican party has never yet even professed any such policy. Mr. Greeley, on the contrary,—and I take the Republican party as the highest type of political action at the present time,—avowed in the *Tribune*, that he had often voted for a slaveholder willingly, and he never expected the time would come when he should lay down the principle of refusing to vote for a slaveholder to office;—and that sentiment has not only been reiterated by others of the Republican party, but has never been disavowed by any one. Suppose that you could develop politics up to this idea, that the whole patronage of the Government should be turned in favor of Abolition. It would take two or three generations to overturn what the Slave Power has done in sixty years, with the power of aristocracy and the strength of prejudice on its side. With the patronage of the Government in its control, the Republican party must work slowly to regenerate the Government against those elements in opposition, when, with them in its favor, the Slave Power has been some sixty years in bringing about such a result as we see around us. To reverse this, and work only with the patronage of the Government, it would take you long to effect the cure. In my soul, I believe that a dissolution of the Union, sure to

result speedily in the abolition of slavery, would be a lesser evil than the slow, faltering, diseased, gradual dying out of slavery, constantly poisoning us with the festering remains of this corrupt political, social and literary state. I believe a sudden, conclusive, definite disunion, resulting in the abolition of slavery speedily, in the disruption of the Northern mind from all connection with it, all vassalage to it, *immediately*, would be a better, healthier, and more wholesome cure, than to let the Republican party, even if it could ever gain the power, exert this gradual influence through the power of the Government for thirty or sixty years.

We are talking about the best way of getting rid of a great national evil. Mr. WILSON's way is to put down the Union as a "fixed fact," and then educate politics up to a certain level. In that way we have got to live, like Sinbad, with Cushing, and Choate, and Hillard, and Hallett, and men like them, on our shoulders for the next thirty or forty years, — with the Deweys and President Lords, and all that class of men, — with the Hunker School Committees approving George Hillard's school-books, from which no young man, even with a million-power microscope, would discern that WHITTIER ever wrote an anti-slavery line, — all this timid servility of the press, — all this lack of virtue and manhood, — all this corruption of the pulpit, — all this fossil hunkerism, — all this selling of the soul for a mess of pottage, — is to linger, — working in the body politic for thirty or forty years, and we are gradually to eliminate the disease! What an awful future! What a miserable chronic disease! What a wreck of a noble nation the American Republic is to be for fifty years!

That is HENRY WILSON's cure — and why? Only to save a piece of parchment that ELBRIDGE GERRY had instinct enough to think did not deserve saving, as long ago as 1789! He would leave New York united to New Orleans, with the hope (sure to be baulked) of getting freer and freer from year to year. I want to place her, at once, in the same relation towards New Orleans that she bears to Liverpool. (Applause.) You can do it, the moment you break the political tie. What will that do? I will tell you. The New York pulpit is to-day one end of a magnetic telegraph, of which the New Orleans cotton market is the other. The New York stock market is one end of the magnetic telegraph, and the Charleston *Mercury* is the other. New York statesmanship! Why, even in the lips of Seward, it is sealed, or half sealed, by considerations that take their rise in the cane-brakes and cotton-fields of fifteen States. Break up this Union, and the ideas of

South Carolina will have no more influence on Seward than those of Palmerston. The wishes of New Orleans will have no more influence on Chief Justice Shaw than the wishes of London. The threats and party tactics of Brooks, Soulé, Blair and Benton will have no more influence on the *Tribune* than the thunders of the London *Times* on the hopes of the Chartists. Bancroft will no longer write history with one eye fixed on Democratic success, nor Webster invent "laws of God" to please Mr. Senator Douglas. We shall have as close connection, as much commerce; we shall still have a common language, a common faith and common race, the same common social life; we shall intermarry just the same; we shall have steamers running just as often and just as rapidly as now. But what cares Dr. Dewey, in New York, for the opinion of Liverpool? Nothing! What cares he for the opinion of Washington? Every thing! Break the link, and New York springs up like the fountain relieved from mountain load, and assumes her place among decent cities. (Applause.) We mean no special praise of the English courts, pulpit or press, by these comparisons; our only wish is, to show that however close the commercial relations might continue to be between North and South, and in spite of that common faith and common tongue and common history which would continue to hold these thirty States together, still, as in the case of this country and England, wedded still by the same ties, the mere sundering of a political union would leave each half free, as that of 1776 did, from a very large share of the corrupt influence of the other.

That is what I mean by Disunion. I mean to take Massachusetts, and leave her exactly as she is, commercially. She shall manufacture for the South just as Lancashire does. I know what an influence the South has on the manufacturers and clergy of England;—that is irresistible in the nature of things. We have only human nature to work with, and we cannot raise it up to the level of angels. We shall never get beyond the sphere of human selfishness; but we can lift this human nature up to a higher level, if we can but remove the weight of this political relation which now rests upon it. What I would do with Massachusetts is this—I would make her, in relation to South Carolina, just what England is. I would to God that I could float her off, and anchor her in mid ocean! (Loud applause.) "Where shall disunion commence?" Why, if it cannot commence any where else, I would commence it round Plymouth Rock. (Cheers.) Begin again, and see if we cannot do as much in 236 years as our fathers did—create a great nation out

of this wilderness. Would to God we had only the difficulties of an empty wilderness to deal with!

What I mean by Disunion is simply that breaking of the political arrangements and connections — you cannot break the others — which would leave us our Websters and Everetts — raw material, out of which, as Dr. Johnson said of Scotchmen, “if you caught them very young, you might make something” — (laughter and applause); that is, if you caught them young, and subjected them to wholesome influences, kept them out of the fatal maelstrom of national temptation. HENRY WILSON was a much more decent man when he was not tall enough to look over the fences of Massachusetts, than when he got so high that he could see as far off as Washington; then his head turned slightly, and now he values Washington far more than he did when his ambition was content with the little Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Then, if you ask me what influence this would have on slavery, I answer, it would have, in the first place, the influence of political economy; that, taking from the Government the support of Northern sympathy and countenance, the South would have to set about getting a government. Government is an expensive luxury. You must get taxes to support it. Where will you levy your taxes? They must rest on productions. Productions are the result of skilled labor. You must educate your laborer, if you would have the means for carrying on a government. Despotisms are cheap; free governments are a dear luxury — the machinery is complicated and expensive. If the South wants even a theoretical Republic, she must pay for it — she must have a basis for taxation. How will she pay for it? Why, Massachusetts, with a million workmen, men, women and children, — the little feet that can just toddle bringing chips from the wood-pile, — Massachusetts only pays her own board and lodging, and lays by about three per cent. a year. And South Carolina, with one half idlers, and the other half slaves, doing only half the work of a free man, — only one-quarter of the population actually at work — how much do you suppose she lays up? Lays up a loss! (Laughter.) By all the laws of political economy, she lays up bankruptcy, — of course she does! Put her out, and let her see how sheltered she has been from the laws of trade by the Union. The free labor of the North pays her plantation patrol, we pay for her government, we pay for her postage, and for every thing else. Launch her out, and let her see if she can make the year's ends meet. And when she tries, she must educate her labor in order to get the basis for taxation. Educate slaves! Make a locomotive with its furnaces of open



wire work, fill them with anthracite coal, and when you have raised it to white heat, mount and drive it through the doors of Oliver Whipple's powder manufactory, and you are safe, compared with a slaveholding community educating its slaves. (Laughter and applause.) But South Carolina must do it, in order to get the basis for taxation to support an independent government. The moment she does it, she removes the safeguard of slavery. What is the contest in Virginia now? Between the men who want to make their slaves mechanics, for the enhanced wages it will secure, and the men who oppose, for fear of the influence it will have on the general security of slave property and white throats. Just that dispute will go on, if ever the Union is dissolved. Slavery comes to an end by the laws of trade. Hang up your Sharp's rifle, my valorous friend! The slave does not ask the help of your musket. He only says, like old Diogenes to Alexander, "Stand out of my light!" Just take your awkward proportions, you Yankee Democrat and Republican, out of the light and heat of God's laws of political economy, and they will melt the slave's chains away! (Enthusiastic applause.) Take your distorted Union, your nightmare monster, out of the light and range of those laws of trade and competition; then, without any sacrifice on your part, slavery will go to pieces! God made it a law of his universe, that villany should always be loss; and if you will only not attempt, with your puny efforts, to stand betwixt the inevitable laws of God's kingdom, as you are doing to-day, and have done for sixty years, by the vigor that the industry of sixteen States has been able to infuse into the sluggish veins of the South, slavery will drop to pieces by the very influence of the competition of the nineteenth century. That is what we mean by Disunion! (Applause.)

The slaveholder says that the Union is his safeguard. Mr. WILSON is for preserving it at every hazard. I like to learn from the enemy. If the slaveholder loves the Union, I hate it; the love of so sagacious a tyrant is authority enough for my hate. (Applause.) If the slaveholder clings to the Union, it is instinct. "Instinct is a great matter," says Shakspeare. Every Abolitionist that ever got his head above water was saluted by the title "Traitor!" The slaveholder knew what he was about when he said so, for he felt that if the man ever got his heart also above water, he would feel that treason was his first duty. The Union has been too great a temptation for Northern liberty. The South has bought up our great men faster than nature could make them. (Applause.) It always will. It is true of our pulpit, of our literature, of our statesmanship — the temptation is too great. All the temptations of

self-interest are on the side of slavery. You say you are going to change them. How are you going to change them? You cannot change them by the Sermon on the Mount. I do not doubt the power of the Sermon on the Mount in the long run. Truth will conquer, if you give her time. Centuries hence, Ideas will conquer even the material strength of the country; but to-day, in Wall Street, two per cent. a month is its Sermon on the Mount (laughter); and as long as it is so, Wall Street will bow before two thousand million of dollars, invested in slaves; and as long as that is so, the Bankses, who think themselves fortunate to get upon the steps of the Merchants' Exchange, will bow to Wall Street, and its Gospel of two per cent. a month.

You cannot raise politics above the level of the average public sentiment. I know that, in the long process of time, we could reëducate the nation. But what new circumstances that far future may bring, I know not. We are working with the tools nearest our hands. I believe that Banks and Webster, and that class of men, are as good men as in the ordinary—the average. What I want is, to tempt them to justice. When you want an Irish donkey to go ahead, you put a bundle of hay before his nose. That is just what the South does with every politician,—it has a bribe for them all. As long as men like Caleb Cushing can have seventy million of dollars per annum to bestow in patronage, I have no hope for the nation; and I do not believe there is but one Caleb Cushing in all Yankeedom;—Nature did not “break the die” when she had made him. (Loud applause.) Suppose such a man, with seventy million of dollars to spend annually, to go out into the highways and byways, and into the House of Representatives of an Anti-Slavery Congress, and do you believe that within our day there is any hope of such a state of immaculate virtue, of high-toned honor, as will secure such a momentous triumph as that of Liberty against Slavery? I doubt it. At any rate, the most hopeful method of getting out of danger is, not to struggle vainly against the Cataract of Niagara, but to get *out* of the sweep of the current. The Republican is forced to confess that the Slave Power is almost as omnipotent as the downward current of Niagara, and he proposes to go up the Falls! Now, Disunion means to avoid them; or rather, it proposes to dig down the whole rampart of Table Rock, and produce a dead level, without a current. (Cheers.) It proposes to take bad circumstances out of the way. It proposes to take down this government that our fathers created, which is found not to work well. That is all it proposes.

Does any man think that anarchy will result? Why should it?

Anarchy does not consist in the absence of parchments. The same conservative elements that keep the government in place now, will exist then. Massachusetts does not make money merely because South Carolina has the right to whip slaves. That is not the element of her prosperity. The element lies in the fact, as WARD BEECHER says, that there are more brains in a Yankee's hands than in most men's heads. Therefore we make money; therefore we are a well-ordered State; and we shall always be so while that fact remains. Dissolution of the Union gets rid of slavery, because it is an artificial institution, backed up by artificial laws, which, when you let down the waters to a common level, must go to pieces by the action of gravity. The dissolution of the Union is removing the dam. To-day the white man stands with his heel on the head of the slave. You and I stand behind him—you, voters, directly, and all of us, by the impossibility of making our protest fully known. When dissolution takes place, I do not say the slave will cut his master's throat, or burn his mansion-house. All I say is, that he will probably try to do it, unless the master plants in his heart a motive not to do so; and until he does, "God speed the first insurrection in the Carolinas!" I have no love for insurrections; but "Hands off!" is a good Saxon motto. Let the two races fight it out; and if the white man has no means of defence, by making the black man love him, then he will suffer for the misgovernment of two centuries. That is his own lookout. Gen. WILSON says, he "believes that the liberal, high-minded, *just* (!) men of the South will, in their own time and in their own way, bring about a safe emancipation." I never knew of a race of oppressors that was preached into doing justice; they have always been bullied into it. If any man thinks otherwise, let him show me a single instance where a powerful, despotic class ever voluntarily surrendered power out of its own hands. I believe in the slaveholder being brought to give bonds for good behavior, by the circumstances in which he is to be placed, by the necessities of his position. Talk of chivalry! The whole South is one great magazine of cowards! Ten slaves in the upper corner of Tennessee are *suspected* (for they did not keep the poor fellows alive long enough to prove it) of an intention to rebel, and the easternmost corner of chivalrous Virginia trembles! too mad with fear to wait the second news from Tennessee, that there was no plot or purpose to rise. Our old Professor of Natural Philosophy, John Farrar, used to say to us,—with great solemnity,—“If I touch that spot, the universe trembles.” It was true; and when a slave makes an impudent answer on the banks of the Mississippi, South Carolina trembles. That

is the chivalry of the South! That present fear is kept down by the consciousness that sixteen States, with their powerful free blood and organized strength, stand round the system. Take it off! That fear is God's own stimulus to virtue—let it have full play! When they set horses to run in the Roman races, each horse bears about him a little net-work of pointed pricks, that the faster he goes, makes him run yet faster. I would set the slaveholder to running, with four millions of slaves for the pricks. (Applause.) Dissolution is my method for that race. Dissolution, in other words, is only the philosophy of letting natural causes have free play. I would take down the *dam* of the Union, and let loose the torrent of God's own water-courses; and, like every current, you may be sure it will clear a channel for itself. (Loud applause.)

The Convention then adjourned to Brinley Hall, at 7 o'clock.

---

#### EVENING SESSION

The Convention was called to order by Rev. Mr. Higginson.

A letter was read from Hon. GEORGE R. RUSSELL, of Roxbury. [See Appendix.]

After the reading of this letter, Mr. Higginson, in behalf of the Committee on Resolutions, offered the following as an addition to the series offered at the morning session:—

Resolved, That a State Committee of seven be appointed, whose duty it shall be, by means of Conventions, tracts, newspapers, and political or other organizations, public and private, to secure the efficient propagation of the doctrine and policy which this Convention proclaims.

Resolved, That we especially recommend the calling of a general Convention of the free States during the current year.

Resolved, That the State Committee be instructed to prepare and issue, as soon as possible, an address to the people in behalf of our principles.

The Hutchinsons then sang the anti-slavery song, entitled "Right and Wrong, or the Good Time Coming"; after which, the Convention was addressed by STEPHEN S. FOSTER, of Worcester.

Mr. Foster argued that the mass of the people were ripe for revolution—they felt that this Union ought to be dissolved, and were ready to do their part in the work;—they were not the politicians, the merchants

and manufacturers, but they were the independent, hard-fisted yeomanry of the land, if they could see some practical way of accomplishing it.

He was in favor of the organization of a political party in the State, outside of the Federal Union, and abjuring all connection with the United States Constitution.

He concluded by offering a series of resolutions, which he said he did not expect would be passed, but which he desired, nevertheless, should go into the record of the proceedings:—

1. Resolved, That as men and citizens, we claim the right fully to discuss the character and claims of our political institutions, and to amend, revolutionize or abolish them, in accordance with our own convictions of duty; nor shall we be deterred from the exercise of this right by the denunciations or threats of time-serving politicians or a mercenary press.

2. Resolved, That the experience of more than sixty years has proved our national government to be a mere creature and tool of the Slave Power, subservient only to the purposes of despotism—a formidable obstacle to the advancement and prosperity both the free and slave States—a libel upon all our Democratic theories of government—a disgrace to the civilization of the age, and a bitter curse to the cause of freedom in our own country and throughout the world.

3. Resolved, That in view of this long and painful experience, we have no longer any hope of its reformation, but are fully convinced that the best interests of every section of the country require its immediate dissolution.

4. Resolved, That it is the duty of the friends of freedom in all parts of the country to unite upon some practical and well-devised measures for the accomplishment of this object, and for the subsequent organization of a National Government which shall neither tolerate slavery nor any other institution which is at variance with our Democratic theories.

5. Resolved, That this Convention recommends, as the first step towards the accomplishment of this object, the organization in each of the States of a political party outside of the present Constitution and Union—a party whose candidates shall be publicly pledged, in the event of their election, to ignore the Federal Government, to refuse an oath to its Constitution, and to make their respective States free and independent communities.

Mr. PHILLIPS then took the platform, and delivered an address, that was even more eloquent than his speech in the afternoon; at the close of which, Mr. WILKINS, of Pembroke, spoke to the Convention, in opposition to the views of previous speakers. He considered the Constitution an anti-slavery instrument, and was for adhering to the Union, and organizing a party which should take the ground that the Constitution did not authorize, tolerate, or establish slavery.

PARKER PILLSBURY then took the platform, and occupied about half

an hour in an earnest and powerful speech, reviewing the political history of the country for the past ten or fifteen years, and vindicating the radical and uncompromising doctrine of Disunion as the only hope for the salvation of the slave and the redemption of the land. The history of the political Anti-Slavery enterprise, he said, was a history rich in instruction, and was a remarkable verification of the apostolic sentiment, that "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God." Mr. P.'s address was listened to with the deepest interest, and frequently applauded.

The question was then taken on the resolutions, and they were declared adopted.

The following gentlemen were appointed the State Committee, as ordered by the resolution reported by the Business Committee:—

#### STATE COMMITTEE.

REV. T. W. HIGGINSON, of Worcester; GEN. E. M. HOSMER, of W. Boylston;  
HON. FRANCIS W. BIRD, of Walpole; CHARLES BRIGHAM, of Marlboro';  
CHARLES K. WHITTLE, of Boston; REV. SAMUEL MAY, Jr., of Leicester;  
DR. DANIEL MANN, of Sterling; SETH HUNT, of Northampton;  
ELBRIDGE SPRAGUE, of Abington.

After another song from the Hutchinsons, and the transaction of some business relating to organization, the Convention adjourned.

FRANCIS W. BIRD, *President.*

J. M. W. YERRINTON, }  
S. D. TOURTELOTTE, } *Secretaries.*

## APPENDIX.

---

### LETTER FROM HON. AMASA WALKER,

(FORMERLY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MASSACHUSETTS.)

NORTH BROOKFIELD, Jan. 10th, 1857.

DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter, inviting me, in behalf of a Committee, to attend a convention to be held at Worcester, on the 15th instant, “to consider the practicability, probability, and expediency of a separation between the free and slave States.”

I do not now expect that my engagements will allow me to be present at your Convention. I should be happy to do so, for I am not in the least afraid to hear the questions you propose to consider, discussed in all their bearings, and to the fullest extent. I hold it as a settled principle, that whenever it is authoritatively assumed that any subject, political or religious, is so sacred that no one has a right to examine it in broad daylight, and with perfect freedom, then we may be sure that the subject, thus tabooed, is one we have especial occasion to investigate.

That your Convention and its proceedings will be denounced in the most opprobrious terms—that the press universal will open its batteries upon you, for even venturing to inquire into “the expediency of a separation of the free and slave States,” I feel quite assured; and that such are your expectations I have no doubt. I therefore admire your courage, in thus braving the newspaper wrath of the country, North and South. For it is a fact, as curious as it is significant, that, while the Southern press teems with the most violent and ultra disunion sentiments, the moment any movement is made at the North, contemplating even the possibility of such an event, the whole South is thrown into convulsions at our treasonable proceedings, and joins its Northern allies in their aspersions and maledictions!

To cry up the Union, and cry down all those who, *in the free States*, in any way or manner, however calmly and discreetly, examine the great question, whether our permanent national prosperity and happiness can be preserved, while the dead carcass of slavery is bound to the living body of freedom, seems at the present day to be the great business of politicians and the press.

For one, I must confess, I am sick of so much cant about “the Union.” I know perfectly well that it is feigned and false—that those who indulge in it do it because they think they must, and lest they should be themselves damned as “disunionists”—a name of reproach they dread, far more than that of “traitors to freedom.” Our political men seem to feel, that, so long as they insist that they are in favor of the Union, at all hazards and in every emergency, they are safe; hence they are constantly shouting, at the top of their voices, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!”

In my humble opinion, it is high time that this hypocritical bluster was silenced. But that work can only be done in primary assemblies of the yeo-

manry of the country, like that you propose to hold. The people of Massachusetts, I have the best reason to know, are quite ready to take the ground, *practically*, that they will have *liberty and Union*, or no Union whatever. They are ready not only to declare, but to act, on the principle that freedom shall be permanent and dominant, that slavery shall surrender all claims to control affairs of this nature, or they will cut off all connection with it. There never was a time in the history of this country when the people needed bold and determined leaders more than at this moment. But such leaders the people must themselves create by resolving that such men, and such only, shall receive their countenance and support. If the people will but exhibit the right spirit, they will soon have leaders of the right stamp.

No one thing, as it seems to me, is so threatening to all our great interests as the blind idolatry which the press of the country, whether literary, political, or religious, pays to "the Union;" nothing is so calculated to enslave the people, stupify the public conscience, and destroy all true manhood. I have not the least hope for our land until this abject, craven spirit is rebuked, and men speak out as boldly and freely on the subject of "the Union" as they do on other matters.

The Union, we should remember, is a *means*, and not an *end*. While it can be used to promote the great interests of freedom, and accelerate human progress, every man should give to it his hearty and cheerful support; the moment it ceases to answer that end, or becomes an engine of tyranny and oppression, it should be at once and for ever repudiated. Such are my honest and earnest convictions, and I will utter them fully and frankly, at whatever peril.

I am a Union man, with all my heart and soul, and I desire most anxiously that all the States of our great confederacy should remain together in harmony and peace, *provided the great ideas of the Declaration of Independence can be fully realized by it, but certainly not otherwise*. How this can be done seems now, after all the demonstrations we have had, more than problematical. *Slavery and freedom are absolute and irreconcilable antagonisms, that cannot by any human possibility coexist*. There is not, never was, and never can be, any "concord between Christ and Belial."

Now I think that the more fully and calmly we examine this great question, the better it will be for our common country. The incessant stream of fulsome adulation of the Union, which flows from the press of the North, degrades and disgraces us in the eyes of the people of the South, and leads them to despise and trample on us. They regard it, as well they may, as mean, dastardly, and mercenary. We shall never take one step in the right direction until we have, in the most unequivocal manner, announced to them, in language they can neither misconstrue nor misunderstand, that we are determined that *freedom shall be national*, that slavery, if allowed to exist at all, shall be a local institution, to be tolerated only within its present limits, and that every proper means shall be used to terminate it as soon as practicable; that the General Government shall not recognise it at all, or give it countenance, either directly or indirectly.

Now, sir, if the object of yourself and your associates is to awaken the people to a free and fearless discussion of this great question, with a determination to act in such a manner as their conviction shall dictate, let that action be what it may, then I am with you; if not, then you can, and doubtless will, go on very satisfactorily without me; but at all events, I am right glad that somebody has had the courage to move in this matter. The spell must be broken, even at the risk of broken heads, and those who have the hardihood to engage in such a work, are the men to do it.

It is now twenty-five years since I entered the anti-slavery field, and engaged in active efforts to stem the fearful tide of oppression in our land. The lapse of time, the experience and observation of a quarter of a century, have more and more convinced me of the terrible nature of that great sys-



tem of chattel slavery by which, as a people, we are disgraced and demoralized. While I live, therefore, whether acting in the moral or political field, in the Church or State, I hope and intend to be found faithful and true to the great interests of humanity. Under the banner of Freedom I have hitherto fought, and under that banner, whether inscribed with Union or Disunion, I intend to fight to the last.

I have the honor to be, dear Sir,

Your friend and servant,

AMASA WALKER.

REV. THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON, Worcester.



## LETTER FROM HON. HENRY WILSON.

SENATE CHAMBER, Jan. 10, 1857.

REV. T. W. HIGGINSON :

DEAR SIR,—I have received your note, enclosing the call of several citizens of Worcester, who believe “the existing Union to be a failure,” upon the people of Massachusetts, “to meet in Convention, at Worcester, on Thursday, the 15th of January, to consider the practicability, probability, and expediency of a separation of the free and slave States ;” and inviting me, in behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, “to be present, or to communicate my sentiments, on the subject in question.” Your Committee of Arrangements could not expect me to “be present” at your Convention ; but as you have invited me “to communicate my sentiments,” I will frankly do so.

I have read, with sincere and profound regret, this call on the people of Massachusetts “to meet in Convention to consider the practicability, probability, and expediency of a separation of the free and slave States.” I regret to find gentlemen rushing into a movement which can have no other issues than to put a burden upon the cause to which they have given so many years of self-sacrificing toil, and to impair their influence in the future. Impotent for good, this movement can only be productive of evil. It may be seized upon by adroit political leaders to alarm the timid ; to deceive and mislead those who have already been deluded and misled by artful men into the support of the interests of slavery. Imprudent words and rash deeds, on the part of the opponents of slavery, only add to the power of those in the North and in the South, who have used the people to secure the ascendancy of the slave propagandists.

The American people are a patriotic people. They love their country—their whole country. The preservation of that Union which makes us one people, is with them a duty imposed alike by interest and patriotism. If the movement at Worcester shall have any effect at all, it will only serve to array against those who are battling to arrest the further extension of slavery, and the longer domination of the slave perpetualists, that intense, passionate and vehement spirit of nationality which glows in the bosoms of the American people.

I avail myself, therefore, of your invitation to “communicate my sentiments” to the Convention, to frankly announce to you and the signers of the call, that I have no sympathy for, nor can I have any connection with, any movement which contemplates the dissolution of the Union. The logic of the head and the logic of the heart teach me to regard all such movements, either in the North or the South, as crimes against liberty. I denounced, during the late canvass, the unpatriotic and treasonable language of Southern

politicians and presses. I have denounced them here, on the floor of the Senate. I shall hold the incoming Administration responsible before the country, if it bestows its patronage upon the Richmond *Enquirers*, Charleston *Mercurys*, and New Orleans *Deltas*; and I shall resist the confirmation of the Wises, the Floyds, and the Rhetts of the South, if they shall be placed before us for official positions.

I cannot but indulge the hope, that when the signers of this call assemble in the heart of our good old Commonwealth, they will conclude to leave all the impotent and puerile threats against the Union to the Southern slave propagandists, and proclaim their readiness to follow, in the conflicts of the future, the banner of "LIBERTY AND UNION," around which rallied, in the late canvass, nearly fourteen hundred thousand intelligent and patriotic American freemen. A firm and inflexible adherence to this constitutional and patriotic position will, I am confident, secure the prohibition of slavery in all places under the executive authority of Congress, overthrow the slave power in the National Government, and prepare the way for the peaceful emancipation of the bondmen by the consent of the people of the slaveholding States.

Yours, truly,

HENRY WILSON.

#### LETTER FROM REV. THEODORE PARKER.

*Railroad Cars from New Haven to }  
Boston, Jan. 18, 1857. }*

MY DEAR HIGGINSON :

I have no time but car-time, and no space but the railroad, so you will excuse me if my letter be writ with a pencil, and dated between nowhere and everywhere.

I cannot attend your Convention to-morrow, as other business takes me elsewhere. Yet I am glad you have called it. For the South has so long cried "wolf," "wolf," and frightened every sheepish politician at the North, that it is time somebody should let those creatures have a glimpse of the real animal, and see how the South will like his looks. I once heard of a very honest, sober and Christian sort of a man, who was unequally yoked to one of the most shrewish mates that ever cursed soul or body. She was thriftless, idle, drunken, dirty, lewd, shrill-voiced, with a tongue which went night and day, and was, besides, feeble-bodied, and ugly to look upon. Moreover, she beat the children, starved them, and would not allow them even to attend school, or to go to meeting, but brought up the girls in loose ways. Whenever the good man ventured to remonstrate a little, and took the part of one of his own children, the termagant, who came of no good stock herself, but had an "equivocal generation," called him a "beggar," "greasy mechanic," an "abolitionist," and with ghastly oaths told him he was "not fit company for a lady of her standing"; and if he found fault with her standing and character, she would leave his bed and board for ever, and let his old house fall about his ears for him. She justified her conduct by quoting odd-ends of Scripture. She had "divine authority" for all she was doing. "Wasn't there Jezebel, in the Old Testament, and the strange woman who turned the heart of Solomon, and his head too? Did not the book of Proverbs speak of just such a woman as she was; and was there not another great creature in scarlet, spoken of in the New Testament? The book of Revelation was on her side." So the shrew raised her broom-stick, and beat the poor hen-pecked husband till he apologized as humbly as any Repub-

lican member of Congress in 1856 or '57. He did not intend to interfere with her beating his sons, or prostituting his girls; he thought her interpretation of the Bible was right—there were probably just such women as she in Sodom and Gomorrah; he begged she “would not leave his house.” She “might beat him—he was a non-resistant: but he hoped she would not strike too hard, for it really hurt his feelings.”

So it went on till the house became a nuisance to the neighborhood, and the submissive husband was every where looked upon as a cowardly sneak. But, one day, he made up his mind to make a spoon or spoil a horn, and, with his ox-whip in his hand, thus addressed the shrew: “Madam, I shall treat you gently, for your wickedness is partly my fault; but I turn over a new leaf to-day. Either you become a good wife, or else you leave my house, and that for ever, with the little bundle of property you brought into it. I shall take the children. Take five minutes to make up your mind. Go or stay, just as you like.”

To the amazement of the man, she fell down at his feet, weeping bitterly, promised all manner of good things, and, after he had lifted her up, actually began to put the house in order. She treated him with respect, and her children with considerable tenderness, and for many years they lived together with about as much welfare as man and wife commonly enjoy.

I am glad to see any sign of manhood in the North, and I think a fire in the rear of some of our Republican members of Congress will do them no harm. But I do not myself desire a dissolution of the Union just now. Here is the reason: The North is seventeen millions strong; and the South contains eleven millions, whereof four millions are slaves, and four millions are “poor whites.” Now, I don’t think it quite right for the powerful North to back out of the Union, and leave the four millions “poor whites,” and the four millions slaves, to their present condition, with the ghastly consequences which are sure to follow. Men talk a great deal about the Compromises of the Constitution, but forget the GUARANTEES of the Constitution. The very article which contains the ambiguous “rendition clause,” has also these plain words: “The United States shall guarantee a republican form of government to every State in the Union.” Art. 4, sec. 4. [I quote from memory. You can look at the passage.] Now, I would perform that obligation before I dissolved the Union. I don’t think it would have been quite fair for strong-minded Moses to stay in Midian, keeping his sheep and junketing with his neighbors. No. “So the Lord said unto him, Down into Egypt with you; meet Pharaoh face to face, and bring up all Israel into the land I shall give you. It is not enough to save your own souls alive, but your brethren also, with their wives and little ones.” Why, even that hen-pecked husband in the story had too much stuff to desert his sons and daughters, and run away from their ugly dam. No, sir; the North must do well by those four millions of slaves, and those four millions of “poor whites”; we must bring the mixed multitude even out of the inner house of bondage, peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must.

But, if you insist on separation, and will make dissolution the basis of agitation, why, I think much good will come of it. Let me give a hint as to the line of demarkation between the two new nations. I would say—Freedom shall take and keep,—1, the land east of the Chesapeake Bay; 2, all that is north of the Potomac and the Ohio; all that is west of the Mississippi—i. e., all the actual territory with the right of reversion in Mexico, Nicaragua, and the “rest of mankind;” the entire State of Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, with the part of Louisiana west of the Mississippi.

I think the North will not be content with less than this. Nay, I am not sure that in case of actual separation, Virginia and Kentucky would not beg us to let the amputating knife go clear down to North Carolina and Tennessee, and cut there; for I think there is too much freedom yet in the north-

ernmost slave States to consent to be left to perish with the general rot of the slave limbs.

I used to think this terrible question of freedom or slavery in America would be settled without bloodshed; I believe it now no longer. The South does not seem likely to give way—the termagant has had her will so long; I am sure the North will not much longer bear or forbear. I think we shall not consent to have Democracy turned out of the American house, and allow Despotism to sit and occupy therein. If the North and the South ever do lock horns and push for it, there is no doubt which goes into the ditch. One weighs seventeen millions, the other eleven millions; but, besides, the Southern animal is exceedingly weak in the whole hind-quarters—four millions in weight, not strong in the fore-quarters, of the same bulk, and stiff only in the neck and head—of which Bully Brooks is a fair sample—while the Northern creature is weak only in the neck and horns, which would become stiff enough in a little time.

Yours for the Right, anyhow,

THEODORE PARKER.

#### LETTER FROM HON. JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS.

WASHINGTON CITY, Jan. 7, 1857.

T. W. HIGGINSON :

DEAR SIR,—I have received your note inviting me, on behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, to attend a Convention in Worcester on Thursday next, which is expected to assemble for the purpose of considering the practicability, the probability, and expediency, of a separation between the free and slave States. The questions are of a grave character, and should be well considered. Indeed, amid all that has been said and written upon the subject of slavery, for the last five years, and the action of the Federal government for its extension, it were impossible that reflecting men should have failed to consider the propriety of continuing the Union between our free and slave States; nor is it possible for us to disguise the fact that slavery and freedom are opposites, antagonisms, and cannot well exist together.

Our republican fathers, in laying down the essential truths on which they based their hopes of our nation's glory, first stated the right of all men to life, liberty, and happiness; then declared that governments are instituted among men to secure the enjoyment of those rights; and thirdly, they proclaimed a further self-evident truth, "*that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.*"

I hesitate not to say, that this government has been so administered; for the last quarter of a century, as to be destructive of the lives, the liberties, and happiness of a portion of the people; in short, it has become destructive of the very objects for which it was established. Its influence and its powers have been exerted to extend the most barbarous system of human bondage known to mankind. *Three distinct and separate wars* have been waged to uphold and maintain the system of American slavery. More than *three hundred millions of dollars* have been drawn from the pockets of our laboring people, and paid out by government for that purpose; and more than *five hundred thousand human victims* have been sent to premature graves, to uphold and maintain the interests of an institution which the present admini-

istration and its supporters are seeking to extend and eternize. In one of the wars alluded to, *eighty thousand freemen* were sacrificed to this Moloch of oppression, and, in one day, nearly three hundred fathers, mothers, and children, were barbarously butchered by our army, for no other crime than attachment to their God-given rights of liberty; and the groans of men and women, murdered in Kansas by employees of the government, have not yet ceased to ring in our ears.

We have acquired vast territory, and spread the curse of human bondage over it; we have erected nine slaveholding States, and united them to our federal Union; we have authorized slavery in Utah, New Mexico, and Western Texas; we have authorized a coastwise commerce in human flesh, which is now carried on under the protection of the American flag; we have established slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and involved our people of the free States in the disgrace, the crime, and the expense of returning fugitives from oppression. Under the fostering love of this federal government, the number of slaves has increased more than three millions; and throughout fifteen States and their territories, bereaved fathers and mothers mourn the loss of children, torn from their embrace by brutal slave-dealers, and brothers and sisters, separated from each other, sigh and weep in chains, and millions of hearts are bleeding under the accumulated wrongs of that institution.

Our government has long been administered with the evident intention to overthrow the objects and purposes of those who founded it. Even the Union formed by our fathers was long since abandoned, and a new Union formed with foreign slaveholders, for the avowed purpose of extending and perpetuating slavery, giving the single band of one hundred Texan slaves an influence over the national interests of our free States, equal to sixty-one of the intelligent freemen of the North.

Will slaveholders, or their servile allies, insist that I am bound to revere and cherish this Union with Texas, as the work of our Republican fathers? I repudiate the idea. It was the work of Democratic slaveholders and their minions, against my efforts, and against the efforts of the friends of liberty, against the Constitution, and by the sacrifice of the honor and self-respect of the people of the free States. My ancestors did not toil through seven years of anxiety and bloodshed, for the purpose of subjugating their offspring to the control of slaveholding foreigners, upon such disgraceful terms. To pretend that I feel attachment, love, or veneration, for this new Union with Texas, would bespeak myself a slave. I maintain it from no such emotions. Our Northern people maintain it very much as the Hungarians maintain their union with Austria, for the reason that we can do no better. According to the Democratic doctrine, Congress may, to-morrow, repeal the joint resolution of annexation, and the Union would be dissolved.

Will the slaveholders or the minions of the slave power denounce me for speaking these truths? I bow to no such tyranny. The man who dare not speak his honest convictions is already a slave, and he who would seal the lips of freemen, on any subject, is a tyrant at heart, with no just conception of a freeman's right. Our Union must be maintained by *justice*, not by tyranny.

I hesitate not to declare, that this federal government has been destructive of the ends for which it was instituted, and the people now hold the clear and indisputable right to alter or abolish it, and establish a new one; and that the further maintenance of it is purely a question of *policy*, not of duty.

To the provocations enumerated, Southern statesmen have constantly added threats to dissolve the Union. It is a notorious fact, that for thirty years leading Southern men have cherished the hope of forming a Southern Confederacy, separate and independent of the free States; recently, this plan has come into very general favor at the South. Editors and politicians now announce their determination to secede from the Union as soon as the Republi-

cans shall obtain control of the Federal government, which they generally expect to take place in 1860. Preparatory to this event, they are collecting arms, establishing magazines of powder and military supplies, strengthening their defences, organizing and disciplining their militia, and forming associations and combinations to effect a separation from our free States. Their presses and statesmen generally assert also that they will separate from us, unless the influence of slavery be extended in proportion as freedom expands, over our territories and new States; and they demand that Utah, with its polygamy, and slavery, and concubinage, shall be received into political fellowship by the descendants of the Pilgrims: that New England puritanism shall mingle with the heathenism of Mormon: permitting the barbarians of Utah to hold superior influence in the common government, in proportion to the number of their wives, their slaves, and concubines. They also insist that another Union shall be formed with the Spanish slaveholders of Cuba, giving them superior influence and power in the government, proportioned to the number of their slaves.

Against their designs, we should exert all our influence. Indeed, the people of that free State must be disgraced, who will consent to be thus transferred to the control of Spanish slaveholders, or of the polygamists of Utah. I would maintain the Union *as it now is*, because it can be wielded for the benefit of liberty. But I would not see the people of my State transferred to such new Union.

Under these circumstances, I think it our true policy and interest to prepare for the future. Say to our slaveholding friends and their allies, we will maintain our present Union, but *we will not be transferred to an unequal and dishonorable Union with the polygamists of Utah, nor to an equally disgraceful Union with Cuban slaveholders*; that the Federal Government shall be restored to the maintenance of the objects and purposes for which it was framed.

I may be permitted to say, that the Republican party is already in the field, basing its hopes of success upon the undying truths, "that all men are endowed by their Creator with the inalienable right to life, liberty, and happiness; that the primal object and ulterior design of a federal government was, to secure all men under its exclusive jurisdiction in the enjoyment of these rights." The rapid progress of these doctrines, since their adoption, leave no doubt of their success, and the day is not far distant, when there will be no oppression, no slavery, no buying and selling God's image, outside the slave States. Within those States we cannot reach it by legislation. That must be done by their own people; but when the moral and religious sentiment of this people shall be concentrated into one focus of burning contempt for those who scourge, degrade, and brutalize their fellow-men, slavery will disappear from the States, and our country will soon be purified from the crimes of slavery.

Many discreet and patriotic men think we should make military preparations, in a manner corresponding with that of our Southern friends. I answer, we have no necessity for such preparation. Ours is the cause of truth and justice, which needs no arms, no violence, no shedding of blood. The advocates of slavery are differently situated; theirs is the cause of oppression, injustice, and crime. It can only be maintained by violence, by arms, and by bloodshed.

Nine slave States are at this time agitated by servile insurrections. White people are murdered daily, and daily slaves are shot down by their masters, without trial, while others are hanged under lynch law. Each murder, whether of blacks or whites, begets new fears and creates new alarms, which continually torment the imaginations of both masters and slaves. Now, I regard it our duty to those slaves, and those masters, to remain in the Union, so that, when they shall apply to our federal executive for protection, we may give just, righteous, and constitutional protection to both master and

slave, by securing each in the enjoyment of his life, his liberty, and the avails of his own labor, according to the intentions and expectations of those who founded the government.

I think we should remain in the Union, not for the purpose of upholding and extending slavery, but for the purpose of upholding and extending *liberty*. If we unite upon the doctrines put forth in our Republican platform, our success cannot be delayed nor postponed. For the first time since the adoption of the Constitution, the fundamental truths on which our government was founded, were placed in issue before the country in June last. In November we carried eleven sovereign States, comprising nearly two-thirds of the free population of the Union, and now, Republican Governors preside over fourteen of the most important, most populous, and wealthy organizations of our federal Union. Our platform is broad as the family of man; it is based on principles which are eternal as the throne of heaven. Truth, like its author, is omnipotent. Our cause, at this moment, commands the political, the moral, and the religious influence of the good and worthy of the nation. It is the cause of freedom, of morality, of religion, of civilization. It is stronger than armies, more potent than the combined influences of oppression and tyranny, combined with armies.

Already the advocates of slavery falter in their efforts to establish that institution in Kansas. Should they, however, proceed in that nefarious work, the total overthrow of the Democratic party is certain. Should they fall back—should the slave power recede from its infamous designs, their prestige will be gone, their sceptre of power will have departed for ever. Let us but continue firm in our position; let us but hold the oppressors at bay for a few years, and the rapid increase of our free population will perfect our triumph. Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington, will soon be added to our list of free States. The laws of nature and of God are co-workers with good men. Acting in harmony with them, no earthly power can resist our progress.

In conclusion, you will permit me to say, that, while I admit and will maintain the right of every man fully to express his views, and compare ideas with those around him, I think our duty and policy unite in urging us to maintain the Union *as it is*, and to reject all propositions to form a new Union with the polygamists of Utah or the slaveholders of Cuba; that we should be active and energetic in our efforts to restore the government to its original position in favor of freedom; that we should increase the number of free States, until the slave power shall be dwarfed to an insignificant portion of our federal Union; that no man shall be elected to any office, who hesitates to exert his political and moral influence to carry out the designs of those who established our government; and that we shall continue to arouse the public conscience of the nation, until oppression shall cease to exist outside of the slave States. We will then say to the slaveholders of those States, *unbind the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free*; or, if you prefer to maintain that institution, "*perish with it*."

For the honor of your invitation, please accept, for yourself and associates, my thanks.

Very respectfully,

J. R. GIDDINGS.

#### LETTER FROM HON. CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

BOSTON, January 10, 1857.

REV. T. W. HIGGINSON, Worcester, Mass. :

DEAR SIR,—I have received your invitation, on behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, for a Convention to be held on the 15th inst., "to consider

the practicability, probability and expediency of a separation between the free and the slave States," to be present, or else to express some opinions on the subject in question.

I am well aware that my study of the slave-question in the United States began much later than that of many respectable individuals who have adopted very opposite conclusions to mine. It is about fourteen years since I reached the conviction that it was the duty of every man having the interests of his country at heart, to form in his mind some definite plan upon which to regulate his share of the public action. But even then, the persons to whom I allude had made up their minds that nothing would do short of an entire separation of the free States from all community of interest with slaveholders. One of the first things, therefore, which I was called to do, was to examine as carefully as I could the grounds upon which this proposition was maintained.

The result of my labor was, that neither as a moral, as a social, nor as a political question, could I give an affirmative answer to the doctrine of a separation. My reasons for this could not be embraced within the limits of a letter, nor do I suppose that it would be worth while to give them. It is enough to say, that I regard the government which has been instituted in this country as one which will run its term as all other human governments have done, and that all efforts to cut it short are simply futile. It is not perfect, nor approaching to perfection, I admit. But it works better thus far for the good of the people than any other system that I know of, and quite as well as any new one likely to be adopted at this day in its place. That it has faults, and grievous ones, no reasonable man can deny; and its greatest defect is to be found in the anti-republican preponderance which it gives to the slaveholding class. But this is, in my view, not so much caused by any error in the instrument of government itself, as by the vacillation and weakness of the great body of freemen who have the power in their own hands to correct it, and yet refuse to use it. So long as they remain unconvinced of the necessity of action, it is idle to expect a separation for this cause. And whenever they do become so convinced, they can act in such a manner as to render separation unnecessary.

Besides, I am inclined to the opinion, that the notion of no union with slaveholders is founded on a mistaken theory of morals. Conceding, if you please, that slaveholding is sin, as bad as you can paint it, I do not understand it as a part of the Christian theory, that we are to have no society with it on that account. If such be the doctrine as to sinners, where are we to stop at home, and who of us will have a right to claim exemption from excommunication? I do not mean to charge upon slaveholders, as a class, that they are irredeemably wicked, any more than I should upon bankers, or brokers, or hotel-keepers, or liquor-sellers, or horse-dealers, or any sort of traders. In all these classes, we very well know that every variety of moral distinction is to be found; yet we are not for that reason to condemn them all as utterly unworthy of a position in our community. If good is to be expected, it is from an opposite course, from continuing to mix with them, and learning to discriminate between the upright and the dishonest, between the worthy and the unworthy; from honoring the former, and endeavoring as far as possible to reclaim the latter. This is the only basis upon which any government extended over human beings so imperfect as we are on this globe can be expected to rest. On this basis, I am willing to continue indefinitely to live with slaveholders, even though some of them should trench a little upon my rights. I can at least hope, under such circumstances, to exert a little beneficial influence in the way of counteraction and amendment. There are high-minded, honorable, conscientious men and women scattered thick all over the slave States. Their difficulties, in the way of acting upon this subject, are very great; and they are necessarily timid, and averse to confronting pub-



lie opinion. Shall we help this excellent class by deserting it, and leaving that public opinion to retrograde until it sinks into impenetrable darkness?

I do not so read my duty. Great reforms in the social condition of nations must, in the nature of things, move slowly, if to be effected without the risk of convulsions. No greater reform was ever proposed since the advent of the Saviour, than this which we advocate in America. It has taken nearly nineteen centuries to make the world Christian, and yet how much of it remains untouched by its humanizing doctrines! It is not for us, then, to be out of patience because twenty or thirty years have passed away without any decisive results in this cause. Yet I would not do, as some have done, under the shelter of this reasoning; I would not seek to excuse myself from doing any work, and put the whole trust in the natural course of Divine Providence, which will bring out its greatest ends by natural means. This is the sophistry of men false at the heart; it is not the argument of a chimney-sweeper, if truly devoted to prosecuting his business. No! The work is to be done with the Divine favor, but by human means. I am in favor of going on as we have been doing for years past, under the Constitution, and by the use of legitimate instruments. That much has already been effected, it seems to me, cannot now be denied. But a great deal remains to be done. Public opinion is not yet in America what it should be on this subject. We who live within the limits of the United States, do not see slavery in the light that all people living outside see it. There is a familiarity with its most revolting features even among our most intelligent classes, which tones down the feelings with which we censure it. A very large part of the citizens of the free States are in the habit of considering the law of slavery, wherever it exists, to be in fact as valid and good law, and as firmly to be supported as if it had its foundations in the most perfect political justice. They believe in the dogma so boldly put forward by Mr. Clay some years ago, that "whatever the law makes property is property." Along the entire border of the free States south and west, is to be found a population who sympathise in opinion more with slavery than with freedom. This whole region is missionary ground. And I think nothing really effective will be done in the way of reform of the system of the General Government, until the doctrines of Liberty shall have been firmly established, where they are as yet either imperfectly understood or absolutely held in contempt.

What does the so-called democratic party of the free States now know of the principles of the American Revolution? Where can it now venture to say a word in defence of human liberty? Yet, although in a minority, it still holds in the aggregate a large number of our citizens. They have lost all their watch-words—and yet they continue a party. Their doctrines are now confined to the limits of extreme conservatism—of protection to all abuses, however great, because it is dangerous to disturb them. Do you think that you will weaken their hold on public opinion by proposing a separation? But a separation from whom? Not from the slaveholders merely, for the work is not thorough whilst you still retain among yourselves a large class who sympathise with them more than they do with you. You must separate as well from these Democrats, the apologists of slaveholders, as from the slave-owners themselves. Do you not perceive that you change the issue at once from a stronger to a weaker ground? You make a domestic question to divide upon at home, instead of one upon which to unite at home against the real evil which is outside of your borders. For my part, I cannot see the wisdom of this course, however others may view it. I think the obvious policy is to persevere in reforming opinion in the free States—to educate the rising generations in a determined hostility to the spread of slavery in America—to infuse something of the genuine spirit of liberty into the still torpid regions of the middle and the western States—and then to trust to time and to the providence of God for a favorable result.

I fear that already I have trespassed upon your patience. And yet I have scarcely touched the subject. If in the little I have said, I am so unlucky as to differ with some whose individual character and purity of motive command my esteem, I trust that I have said nothing in an offensive spirit, or which will render me liable to be misunderstood. This cause will never be aided by strife among its sincere upholders. There is room for all to work, even though they may not all join in one direction.

I am, with great respect, your friend,

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

## LETTER FROM HON. EDWARD WADE.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14, 1857.

Rev. THOS. W. HIGGINSON :

DEAR SIR,—Your favor, enclosing the proceedings of a meeting of citizens of Worcester, Mass., was received in due time, but unavoidable business engagements have delayed an answer until the “eleventh hour.” The objects contemplated by the meeting on the 15th inst. are verily of a magnitude sufficient to demand the most anxious consideration of every Christian, patriot, and philanthropist. I feel as deeply as any man can feel, the enormous mischiefs which have already resulted from the admission of slavery as an element of representative power into what, excluding two or three other blemishes of a like character, would otherwise be a faultless Constitution. But you know the effect of “dead flies in the ointment of the apothecary”; so these most disastrous admissions bid fair to destroy that Constitution which, it is said, could not have been established without them. Still, I do not admit that the Constitution of the United States, rightly and *honestly* construed, furnishes any guaranty for the existence, much less the extension of slavery; but I do admit, that the concession of such a power in the Constitution leaves us of the free States no alternative but secession or submission to slaveholding domination. When this last horn of the dilemma shall be found hopelessly goring us, I shall have as little scruple as any one about the right or the duty of taking the side of freedom at every hazard.

I am fully aware that the treachery of free State office-seekers, in the hope of slaveholding support for national offices, has yielded the pro-slavery construction of the Constitution to the slaveholders. But I know as well, too, that it but requires the *patriotic unity* of the people of the free States, to rescue the Constitution from the hands of its violators. But this unity of the free States, it is said by croakers and unprincipled office-seekers at the North, and howled by the slaveholders, will dissolve the Union. *Well, if so, then so be it*; for one thing is absolutely certain, and that is, that the moral and physical necessities of free and slave institutions do constitute irreconcilable contradictions; and it only needs time to develop the destructive operations of these hostile elements. This view alone satisfies my mind that, in the nature of things, the institutions of the two sections of the country must become homogeneous, or a separation is inevitable. But these institutions can only become homogeneous by a conquest the one of the other, by either a physical or moral contest, or by the combination of both. Hence, to know which of those systems will yield to the other, it needs only to be known which of these has the strongest influence over human nature, taking into the account man’s capricious oscillations between good and evil.

These views, in my own mind, bear directly on the question to be considered by the proposed meeting at Worcester. Viewing the matter in this light,

I can concur with the assertion in your letter, viz. : that "the existing Union is a failure." I believe that while the masses of the people of the free States are but very partially instructed on the nature of the relation of slavery to the Federal Government, and the non-slaveholders of the slave States are in utter ignorance of these relations, the agitation of active measures for a dissolution of the Union are, at best, premature. The people of the free States, even, have not yet exerted, within constitutional limits, the maximum of their moral and political force against the atrocious system of American slavery.

The slaveholders have too little confidence in the inherent strength of the slave system to leave it to the silent workings of its antagonist Liberty. They will provoke hostility by throwing up redoubts about their "domestic institutions." "There is no peace to the wicked"—so that our own quietists may as well hang their harps on the willows. The slavery excitement is more intense now, more widely spread, and more deeply seated in the hearts of the people, than at any former period. The tide has been *rising*, since the voice of Mr. GARRISON was first lifted in behalf of the oppressed. It must be suffered to continue its rising, in the way its first ripple was stirred on the sluggish surface of Northern society. The agitation of the slave question is up, and "will not down." This is needful, and, in my opinion, it is better for the cause, taking human nature as it is, than to attempt to take a step so radical and startling, and so well calculated to frighten the timid, and encourage the mercenary, as a proposition to dissolve the Union. It is the "little leaven" that "leaveneth the whole lump." The "dough" of freedom will be more likely to be *soured* by such yeast as disunion, than to be transformed into healthful food. *Still, no one can say how soon this step may be needed*, to save us all from the dishonor and crime of sustaining an institution so contrary to nature, to Revelation, and to every instinct and sentiment of humanity, as American slavery. For, rather than to give the strength, moral and political, of the people of the Free States to the extension and perpetuity of slavery, *let the Union perish*: for it is better, infinitely better, that any artificial structure, designed and capable of being made an instrument of unmeasured good, should perish for ever, rather than turned into an engine for the perpetuity of the curse and shame of human slavery.

Most truly, yours, &c.,

EDWARD WADE.

#### LETTER FROM HON. GEORGE R. RUSSELL.

JAMAICA PLAIN, Jan. 12, 1857.

Rev. THOS. W. HIGGINSON, Worcester :

DEAR SIR—I cannot attend the Convention to which you have invited me, nor do I think that the time has come for the North to formally propose a dissolution of the Union. The extreme South would gladly see us take the initiative, and it is a part of its policy to drive us to measures which may compel us to become aggressors. There are, doubtless, those who are looking to the formation of a Southern empire, and as they are willing to buy when they cannot steal, provided they can as usual put their hands into Northern pockets, they will cling to us until they have exhausted our resources, or, giving up negotiation, resort to the more summary and congenial modes of piracy and murder to secure whatever territory they may deem necessary to carry out their gigantic felony. When we are no longer useful, they will kick us out, provided we submit to the operation, or adopt the more preferable method of driving us to rebellion.

I believe that there are elements in operation, which will crumble it [slavery] into the dust, and it is better they should work, secretly and silently gnawing at its very heart, than that their action should be anticipated by open and extraneous influences. If, however, I am wrong in this supposition,—if that infernal tyranny is to sit crouching like an incubus on the breast of the nation, and there is no other hope for its overthrow than an utter dissolution of the compact which holds these States in confederacy,—the sooner it is resorted to, the better it will be for us and our children.

I say this with no unkind feeling towards the South, and with no desire to check her prosperity, or to leave her in that helpless imbecility to which separation would reduce her. She cannot be supported by conventions, which periodically determine that she shall be powerful. Resolutions will not alone create national wealth. Commerce and manufactures do not arise at the bidding; and the slave driver's whip is not the magician's wand to convert sterility and weakness into affluence and strength. They are not her friends who counsel her to cut off the arm that sustains her, or to provoke the withdrawal of the only power which gives her vitality. Yet, if she is bent on self-destruction, and can only gain knowledge through the bitter experiences of sorrow and repentance, let her go. We can spare all, and be the better for the loss. There has been enough of threatening. Let us have a little action.

“Stand not upon the order of your going,  
But go at once.”

You will leave behind you, men, wealth, science, and energy, that will build up a Republic which shall be the marvel and the hope of humanity; in which a tyrant cannot dwell, nor a slave breathe. We would not impede your retreat by a single entreaty. We have tried, gentlemen, and been answered by insult. We have confided in your honor, and been cheated; in your generosity, and been laughed at. We have been cajoled by compromise, and lost everything; and we trust you no longer. We have no faith in your promises, no belief in your sincerity, no respect for your character. We have exhibited too much of the conciliation which savors of subserviency, too much of explanation and apology where there should have been either silent scorn or open defiance. Northern men have never yet sown submission, without reaping contempt.

Whether this is, or is not, the time for the North to agitate the question of separation, it certainly has abundant reason to justify itself in so doing. While I have strong doubt as to the present expediency of the measure, I honor those, who, feeling the necessity, come forward as pioneers, without counting on public approval or reprobation. That many will keep aloof, who secretly exult in the movement, may be expected from the experience of all past time. That others will condemn, with the accustomed routine of holy horror, which is always expended on proposed reforms, is as natural a result as the dismay of true believers at the desecration of their idol.

But the Union is not an African *fetish*, to be blindly worshipped, but it is to be honored or despised in proportion to the measure of its powers for good or evil. It may be a blessing or a curse, and must be judged accordingly.

It is not surprising that some should think it time to weigh its value, when slavery is the declared policy of its voters; when old landmarks are removed, and the black flood sweeps over State and Territory,—or if for a time arrested, it is because some more mighty villany is in contemplation; when a false and corrupt basis gives an unequal representation to the country, and allows the Slave States a monstrous advantage, without any compensation to the North; when the constitutional decisions of a pro-slavery Supreme Court are uniformly on the side of wrong; when Southern interests are implicated,

and can as confidently be predicted as the coming on of night; when free speech is stopped by sneaking and cowardly assassination, and the perpetrators are honored for a deed which should have clothed them with the convict's parti-colored garments; when Northern men are daily threatened with violence in the capital of the country, and in some States, the law gives no protection to their lives and property;—in a word, when the whole land is governed by a petty band of slaveholders, who consider every question according to its bearing on slavery, and who are turning what should be a great and glorious nation, into a disgraceful and appalling despotism.

With all these wrongs, and many more, crowding before us, we have in vain sought redress. Every concession on our part has been followed by more flagrant outrages, and our powers of endurance are by no means commensurate to the perseverance and fertile invention of our tormentors.

This state of things cannot last. Those who whine about the Union, and, bidding us forget our injuries, assure us that in no possible event can there be a separation of the States, either mistake the signs of the times, or are deplorably ignorant of the character of their countrymen.

We would keep the Union as long as it is worth keeping, and no longer. When it becomes hopelessly worthless, involving us in constant shame and degradation, it can be, ought to be, and will be broken up.

Respectfully yours,

G. R. RUSSELL.

## LETTER FROM FRANCIS JACKSON.

Boston, January 14, 1857.

THOMAS W. HIGGINSON :

DEAR SIR—I regret my inability to attend the Disunion Convention to-morrow.

Next to the abolition of slavery, there is no object which I so much desire to see accomplished as the political divorce of the North from its most foul connection with negro slavery.

If, formerly, any thing was wanting to awaken the North to a just sense of the sin and folly of continuing in union with the slave States, and, of course, responsible for the infamous system of slavery which exists there, surely, the experience of the past four years must suffice to convince the most skeptical, and the most selfish, that nothing but continual turmoil and dishonor can be expected to result from any longer connection with the slave States.

I rejoice to know that the political absurdity of endeavoring to unite in one community, under one government, two such antagonisms as Freedom and Slavery, is now fast becoming apparent to the Northern people; and we may expect, ere long, a general acquiescence in the necessity of Disunion.

The course of events, for the past twenty years, but more especially, the astounding developments of the Slave Power during the past four years, most conclusively show that a continuance in this Union is sure to result in the establishment of slavery, throughout its whole length and breadth.

If any doubt this conclusion, after witnessing the action of every branch of this Government—Executive, Legislative, and Judicial—then, no evidence will suffice to convince them but the final completion of the iniquity.

At the early part of the anti-slavery movement, the advocates of freedom were continually taunted with the question,—“*Why don't you go and preach to the South—there is no slavery in Massachusetts?*” That question answered itself long ago.

Now the advocates of Disunion are taunted with the question,—“ *Where are you going to draw the line?* ” Our reply is,—Let the line draw itself, while we continue “ to reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.”

England imposed heavy burdens upon our revolutionary fathers, which they feared would enslave them; whereupon, they went for Disunion as a remedy. They decided that question at Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, and Dorchester Heights. All this they did, without knowing where the line would be drawn, or how many of the Colonies would take sides with England.

The line drew itself then, but the North did not find it out until the following year, when that glorious Declaration was issued at Philadelphia, pointing it out.

Believing most firmly that Disunion is the only true remedy for slavery in this country, I welcome every honest effort in that direction.

FRANCIS JACKSON.

#### LETTER FROM HON. O. W. ALBEE.

SENATE CHAMBER, Boston, Jan. 12, 1857.

REV. THOS. W. HIGGINSON :

DEAR SIR—I thank you for the invitation to be present at the Convention to be holden at Worcester the 15th inst.

Respecting as I do, all men who act up to their convictions of duty, however much those convictions may differ from my own, it would give me pleasure to be present at your discussions, were not other labors and obligations pressing upon me, and demanding my immediate attention. If the Union cannot stand the practical working of the truths enunciated in the Declaration of American Independence, it seems to me its value has been calculated. I am not, however, prepared to believe that the triumph of freedom requires the dissolution of the Union. Whether it does or not, I am ready to reiterate and stand by the sentiments I have held and advocated ever since the contest upon the repeal of the Missouri Compromise began—viz.: Let freedom be preserved to Kansas at all hazards.

Yours, very respectfully,

O. W. ALBEE.

#### LETTER FROM REV. HENRY M. DEXTER.

Boston, Jan. 14, 1857.

REV. THOS. W. HIGGINSON :

DEAR SIR—Your polite note from the Committee of Arrangements, inviting my presence at the Convention to be held in Worcester to-morrow, lies before me.

In reply I beg to say, that, while I look forward to a separation of the Free from the Slave States as an event that is very possible, and that ought to be consented to by all good men in preference to perpetual subjection to the Slave Power, I do not see clearly that the time has yet come to despair of a renovation of the Government, and a delivery from those great and grievous evils which now exist, without a resort to that last remedy.

So believing, I could not in conscience take part in the deliberations of your proposed Convention.

I am, very truly and respectfully, yours,

HENRY M. DEXTER.

## LETTER FROM REV. DR. BELLOWS.

NEW YORK, January 6th, 1857.

MY DEAR SIR :

Your invitation to me to participate in the Convention at Worcester, on Thursday, January 15th, called "to consider the practicability, probability, and expediency of a separation between the free and slave States, and to take such measures as the condition of the times may require," has been received, and is respectfully declined.

As you are kind enough to ask some communication from me, I seize the privilege of stating very frankly the reasons why I cannot join your Convention, and I am the more anxious to do this, because you base your invitation, not merely on my "general position, but upon the fearless treatment of the subject of the Union" in my published sermon of November 2d. As I took no ground then not carefully measured, or from which I wish to recede a hair, it seems important, when my opinions attract the notice of a conscientious and intelligent body like yours, to have it distinctly understood what they are, and how entirely they differ from those of Disunionists.

\* \* \* \* \*

The last election, however, has shown that the North is waking up in conscience, courage, and sensibility to her duty, not to herself alone, but to the Nation, the Union, and Humanity. The astonishing effect of the free press in arousing the people, indicates what will be the triumph of another election. The South sees for the first time that the North is in earnest, feels its power, and is determining to exercise it. And this is having an admirable effect upon the discussion of the subject.

It has already forced the intellectual leaders and active statesmen of the South to intrench themselves in a position of absolute defiance to the public opinion of the world. They have been driven for the first time to a step—the next to complete surrender—*i. e.*, the assertion of a code of morals, and a style of reasoning, entirely and exclusively their own, and which makes them moral and rational outlaws from the public morality of Christendom. What are the leaders of the Southern press, but intellectual pirates and moral fillibusters? They have been compelled to take the ground that slavery is no sin, and no misfortune—a righteous, useful, beneficent institution, deserving heroic defence, national adoption, and unlimited extension. The great ability, logical candor, manly audacity, and even moderation of manner with which these propositions have been maintained, have excited my intense admiration. Would that the other and better side had been sustained with equal strength and calmness! But, what is left to those who are shut up in a fortress against which the world is combined? who defy the policy of the age, the sentiments of Christendom, the fundamental principles of economy, justice and humanity? The only step left for the South is to send in a flag of truce, and propose conditions of surrender. She has shot the last ball in her arsenal, eaten her last biscuit, and may now honorably confess that her position is desperate, and throw herself upon the mercy of the country, and the world. In these circumstances, I do not see "a rapid increase in the hostility between the two sections of the Union." On the contrary, I think the hostility reached its head in the last campaign—has begun to decline—as the movements of the Government in Kansas and in Congress appear to indicate—and is never again likely to do any thing but diminish. To make this certain, nothing is necessary but the maintenance of an absolute determination on the part of the free States, to deny, and resist, and prevent the extension of slavery—Union or no Union. Let our overwhelming strength, supported by the public opinion of the world, be seen and felt, and the South will and must

decline further controversy, and yield to an irresistible necessity. It is only as rivals, as equals in rights and powers, as hemispheres of one political globe, that we have maintained mutual hatred and jealousy. Let it be declared that we are not mere equals, or rivals, but the free States are the national policy and destiny, and this hatred will cease. The free States are, by the spirit and letter of the Constitution, by vast superiority in population, by representative rights and legislative powers, the legitimate controllers both of the foreign and domestic policy of the country. Mistake, apathy, folly, fear in the use of this right and duty, have placed us in this balance, in which slavery and freedom, slave soil and free soil, slaveholders and freemen seem in a perfect equipoise of rights and powers, until the turning of the scale has unhappily come to be regarded as a matter of accident and uncertainty, of nice manœuvre, or of bargain and compromise.

To meet this state of things within my own limited sphere of influence and responsibility, I maintained in the last campaign, and in my own pulpit in the sermon to which you refer, the duty of resisting the extension of slavery at the risk of the Union; and to embolden those who regarded this consequence as probable, I gave some reasons for thinking disunion, if forced upon us by the withdrawal of the South, a more supportable calamity to the North, than those who were trying to frighten Free Soilers from their Republicanism had represented it. But I was very far from expressing a desire for disunion, or from advocating separation, which I have never thought practicable, probable or expedient. It was as a threat from the South, that I braved disunion; not as a proposition from the North, that I espoused it.

What I desire now and always to maintain is this: That our conscientious opposition to the extension of slavery is not to be abated or colored by fears for the Union; and that, so far as it depends on the North, we are to stop its extension, let the consequences to the Union—to the North or the South—be what they will. This ground I believe to be the safe ground—the Christian, humane, patriotic, constitutional, unsectional, Union-saving ground. I take it as a lover of the North and a lover of the South; as a believer in the future of the United States. I take it as a hater of slavery, an undying foe to its extension, and a laborer for its overthrow and extinction in the speediest manner and time consistent with our whole duty as American citizens.

With these sentiments, I cannot join your Convention, for I profess none of the articles of faith upon which your call is founded. But as a friend of free debate, and a respecter of conscientious convictions, however unpopular or unwise, I wish you unlimited liberty of discussion, and anticipate no harm from your conferences to the Republic.

With the highest personal respect, yours truly,

HENRY W. BELLOWS.

Rev. Mr. HIGGINSON, of the Worcester Convention.

## LETTER FROM PROF. C. E. STOWE.

ANDOVER, Mass., Jan. 12, 1857.

Rev. T. W. HIGGINSON:

MY DEAR SIR,—If I were in despair as to the Republic, as you seem to be, I should take the course which you adopt. But, when I reflect that the really determined, aggressive slaveholders of the country are probably less than 150,000 against more than 20,000,000 of people; when I perceive that their cause



is sustained entirely by falsehood and violence, without one particle of truth or goodness in its favor; when I see what wonderful progress has been made during the last twenty-five years in enlightening our citizens in regard to the true nature of slavery, and its aggressions on all that is right and honorable; while I expect that this process of enlightenment will go on with accelerating rapidity, and the five years next to come do more than all the twenty-five years that have just passed; I cannot help thinking it is the part of wisdom to hold on and vote, and help the 20,000,000 turn the 150,000 with their corruptions out of the house, (which they had no business ever to occupy,) and not allow the 150,000 to turn out the 20,000,000, to whom the whole justly belongs.

One or the other, I admit, must be done, and that soon.

Very truly, yours,

C. E. STOWE.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 897 814 6